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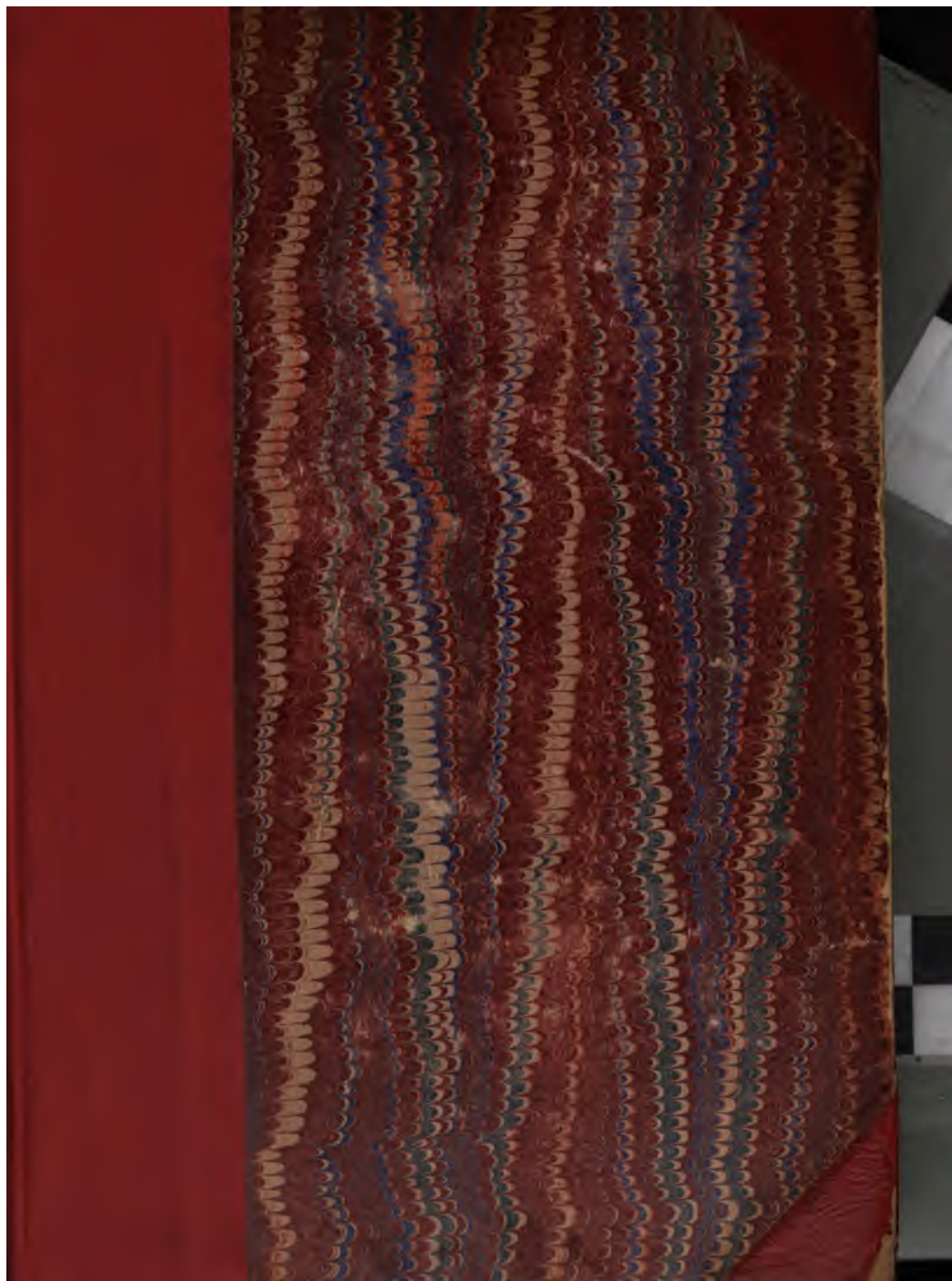
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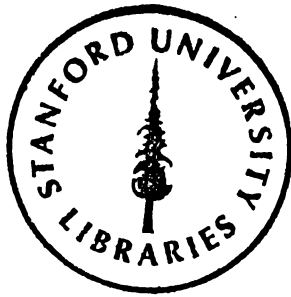
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COURT LIFE BELOW STAIRS.

VOL. IV.



COURT LIFE BELOW STAIRS

OR

LONDON UNDER THE LAST GEORGES

1760—1830

BY

J. FITZGERALD MOLLOY

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COURT LIFE BELOW STAIRS.

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MEANWHILE, the news of the king's madness spread throughout the kingdom, and the consternation and excitement which followed was intense. Vague reports, not only of the violence and hopelessness of his malady, but of his death, were whispered daily, and added to the agitation which possessed all

classes alike. The stocks fell two per cent.; petitions for His Majesty's restoration were offered up by all religious sects, and in the Jewish synagogues, before the Privy Council had framed a form of prayer to be used in the Church of England; and men of all shades of political opinions hurried to town, anxious, and embarrassed that both Houses of Parliament stood prorogued to November 20, beyond which date no power existing in the State could postpone the meeting. Beyond all, a strong feeling pervaded the public mind that the king's death could bode no good to the country.

His Majesty's most bitter affliction seemed indeed to suddenly stir a sense of loyalty in the hearts of the people. Sir Lucas Pepys, one of the royal physicians, told Miss Burney that none of his colleagues lives would be safe, if the king did not recover, and that they all received threatening letters daily. Sir George Baker, another of the medical attendants, had his carriage stopped by the mob, who asked him how the king did, and, on his replying that his case was a bad one, they shouted out, 'The more shame for you.'

But, if there was gloom and consternation abroad, there was fear and depression under the royal roof. The Prince of Wales took possession of Windsor, when all order was banished from the household; and here he remained until the king's removal to Kew, believing he might at any moment be called upon to occupy the throne. The queen, stunned and miserable, lived entirely in two apartments, interfering in no way, and seeing only her daughters and a few of the ladies of her household. She was already slighted as if her reign were a thing of the past, scarce consulted in any of the arrangements concerning the king, and humiliated to find herself ignored by the physicians; who, after leaving His Majesty, proceeded to make their reports to the prince, whom they regarded as the rising sun, and with whom they hoped in this way to gain favour. Left almost friendless and hopeless, her sense of desolation and grief were extreme; her cry, as Miss Burney tells us, "What will become of me? What will become of me?" uttered with the most piercing lamentation, struck deep and hard into all our hearts.'

The Duke of York, the king's second and favourite son, who had returned to England, and had been received with every demonstration of affection by the king a short time before his illness, now joined his brother in his control over the royal household, and became a partner in the disgraceful and unfeeling conduct which the heir to the crown publicly displayed. In the presence of the queen, they spoke of their father's malady in a brusque and heartless manner; and, at a time when the king's malady was sought to be kept secret, the Prince of Wales introduced his friend Lord Lothian into His Majesty's room when it was darkened, that he might hear his ravings at a time when they were at their worst; later on, he overhauled His Majesty's private cabinet, when he came upon some secret papers and 'a vast hoard' of jewels and money. When this latter fact became known to Her Majesty, she, as the prince afterwards wrote in complaint to his father, 'condescended to a species and warmth of reproaches, into which nothing could have surprised or betrayed Her Majesty, but a degree of passion which I have never witnessed, nor believed to exist, in Her Majesty before.'

The prince was attended at Windsor by his personal and disreputable friend and private secretary, Captain, or as he was more generally and familiarly termed, Jack Payne, who had recently been refused admittance into Brookes' Club. This worthy gentleman had as little delicacy in speaking of the king's affliction as if it were a subject for amusement, or, indeed, as the prince himself; and, as he considered 'all secrecy with regard to His Majesty's situation any longer almost inadvisable,' wrote full details of its various stages to his friends, Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Lord Loughborough; moreover, these letters, in which he 'spoke his mind freely,' scarcely conceal a desire, not limited to the captain, for the king's demise.

To Lord Loughborough he writes that His Majesty's 'dissolution is almost the best that can be hoped;' and two days afterwards he says, 'From what I can understand from the *best* authority, the *last* stroke to this unhappy affair cannot be far off. It is what every person in a situation to see is obliged to wish, as the happiest possible termination to the present melancholy scene.' To Sheridan, who was to

have been prime minister under the new king's reign, the captain says, 'The Duke of York, who is looking over me, and is just come out of the king's room, bids me add that His Majesty's situation is every moment becoming worse. His pulse is weaker and weaker; and the doctors say it is impossible to survive it long . . . Since this letter was begun, all articulation even seems to be at an end.' In his next epistle to the same friend, he writes that the king woke at night from a profound sleep, 'with all the gestures and ravings of the most confirmed maniac, and a new noise in imitation of the howling of a dog . . . his theme has been all this day on the subject of religion, and of his being inspired;' and again he speaks of an effort the king made to fling himself from a window.

But days passed, and though His Majesty in no way gave signs of recovering his reason, his physical health improved. It was then deemed advisable that he should be removed to Kew; which would be more convenient to the physicians, as being nearer London, and they declared it likewise best for their patient, on account of the garden, as in Windsor there was

none but what was public to the spectators from the terrace or tops of the houses.

The queen's knowledge of the king's strong aversion to Kew made her consent to the change with great reluctance; the prince, however, was in favour of his removal, and the physicians gave it as their unanimous opinion that such a step was now not only advisable, but necessary; accordingly a privy council was held at Windsor with the Prince of Wales, when the Chancellor, Mr. Pitt, and all the officers of state, were summoned to sign permission for His Majesty's removal. The only difficulty remaining was that of removing him quietly from his favourite Windsor. If they attempted force, Sir Lucas Pepys said, they had not a doubt but his smallest resistance would call up the whole country to his fancied rescue; yet how at such a time prevail by persuasion? The date fixed for his departure was November 29, a day of unusual depression to the queen and her household; her mind, she said, 'quite misgave her about Kew; the king's dislike was terrible to think of, and she could not foresee in what it might end. She would have resisted the measure herself,

but that she had determined not to have upon her own mind any opposition to the opinion of the physicians.'

It was settled between the prince and the doctors that the queen, with the princesses, should quietly depart for Kew, when the king should be informed they had left, and permitted to go through their rooms to assure himself of the fact; he was then to be allured to Kew on the promise of seeing them. On the morning of the 29th, the royal household was in a state of confusion, packing and preparing for the removal; physicians and pages whispering and plotting, the prince anxious, the princesses weeping, with a chill foreboding at heart of impending misery. About ten o'clock the queen departed; 'drowned in tears, she glided along the passage, and got softly into her carriage, with two weeping princesses and Lady Courtown. Then followed the third princess, with Lady Charlotte Finch. They went off without any state or parade, and a more melancholy condition cannot be imagined. There was not a dry eye in the house. The footmen, the house-maids, the porter, the sentinels—all cried, even bitterly, as they looked on.'

The prince had, some days previously, driven to Kew, in order to make arrangements there according to his desires for the reception of the king, queen, and princesses. Accordingly, when Her Majesty arrived, she found the names of those who were to occupy the various apartments written on the doors in chalk; the house was in a miserable condition; no fires were lighted, the rooms needed washing; the wind blew through the ill-fitting windows and doors of the palace, which had never been intended for a winter residence; there were no carpets in the princesses' apartments, and everywhere, on this bleak November day, an air of chill discomfort pervaded.

Towards evening, the king with great difficulty was persuaded to quit Windsor; he was accompanied by only three of his gentlemen, but almost all the inhabitants of the town gathered round the railings to see him enter his carriage, many of whom believed they would never set eyes on him again. On passing through the gates of the park, he covered his face with his hands, and cried; but, recovering presently, he spoke of the pleasure he would

have in meeting his wife and daughters, a satisfaction cruelly denied him. The Right Hon. William Massey, who derived the private information furnished in his 'History of England during the reign of George III.' from the diary of Lady Elizabeth Harcourt—lady of the bed-chamber to the queen, and sister-in-law to General Harcourt, one of the king's favourite equerries—states that when His Majesty arrived at the palace, he found himself a prisoner.

'Proceeding,' the historian writes, 'towards the apartments he usually occupied, he was stopped, and conducted into a large room, where he found the pages who were to be his keepers waiting to receive him. The equerries, among whom was his faithful and valued servant, General Harcourt, according to the orders they had received, withdrew. The physician also who had accompanied the royal patient from Windsor, having consigned him to the charge of the pages, also thought proper to retire, and actually returned to London the same night. The king then impatiently demanded to see his family; and the promise under which he had been induced to leave his palace of Windsor

was, in cruel mockery, fulfilled. The princesses were brought before the window; the king, on seeing them, rushed forward to lift the sash, but it was screwed down. A paroxysm was the immediate consequence of this cruel restraint; the princesses were hastily removed, and the king was dragged from the window, entreating to be allowed to speak to his children.'

Next morning, Miss Burney says she—by the desire of Her Majesty, who had passed a wretched night—went through the cold, dark passages to procure speech of one of the pages, when she learned 'the night had been the most violently bad of any yet passed—and no wonder.'

In the seclusion of Kew Palace, the king's physicians, little understanding his malady and its treatment, no longer dealt with him as if he were a human being; cruelty was indeed considered by the eminent medical faculty of the day the shortest method of restoring reason to the unfortunate victims they undertook to cure of insanity, and such was not spared the king. From Massey's excellent history we learn that

the king's body was enclosed in a machine which left him no liberty of action ; he was sometimes chained to a staple, frequently beaten and starved, and kept in subjection by menacing and violent language. All this was persisted in, though he was seldom violent, unless when provoked. His malady betrayed itself chiefly in ravings, that sometimes continued uninterruptedly for a whole day, and, in one instance, for nineteen hours without intermission. His wife and daughters were not permitted to see him, and he was now chiefly entrusted to a German page named Ernst, whom royal patronage had lifted from an obscure position. This creature used to strike the helpless maniac, and on one occasion, when he wished to prolong his walk in the garden, Ernst seized him in his arms, carried him into his apartments, and, throwing him violently on a sofa, exclaimed to the attendants, 'There is your king for you.' This incident was remembered by His Majesty after his recovery, and was repeated by him to Lady Harcourt. It made such an impression on him that he also mentioned it to Miss Burney.

'He gave me,' she writes, 'a history of his

pages, animating almost into a rage as he related his subjects of displeasure with them, particularly with Mr. Ernst, who, he told me, had been brought up by himself.'

The Prince of Wales and the Duke of York were now seldom seen at Kew, but occupied themselves with schemes for the future, when the former should be proclaimed either king or regent. His faction was headed by Richard Brinsley Sheridan, in the absence of Charles Fox, who was, at the period when the king's illness was first discovered, travelling through France and Italy with Mrs. Armstead; the prince had dispatched a courier for him, his advice and assistance being sorely needed at this crisis by his friends, who looked for his coming 'as the Jews look out for their Messiah.' The whole town was divided into factions that raged with great vigour; the general voice being in favour of the king and Pitt, against the prince, whose reign they dreaded, and his dissipated followers. These latter, urged on by the royal example, sought every means of ridiculing the king, and turning his affliction to heartless merriment.

Massey gives it as an authentic fact that 'the

Prince of Wales, who had a talent for mimicry, and indeed possessed the social qualities suited to the witty and profligate men and women with whom he lived, was in the habit of amusing his companions by *taking off*, as the phrase was, the gestures and actions of his insane father. That which he did himself, he suffered his friends to do; and the standing topic in the prince's circle was ridicule of the king and queen. The Duke of York vied with his brother in defamation of his parents; but he was wholly destitute of the lively talent which sometimes carries off the grosser parts of the most ribald discourse; and the brutality of the stupid sot disgusted even the most profligate of his associates.'

Captain Jack Payne must, of course, follow the royal example, and, according to Lady Harcourt, when he had 'one day uttered some ribaldry about the queen in the presence of the Duchess of Gordon, "You little, insignificant, good-for-nothing, upstart, pert, chattering puppy," said her Grace, "how dare you name your royal master's royal mother in that style?"' a hearty rebuke by which the gallant man scarcely profited, as may be judged from a

letter, preserved in the Auckland correspondence, from Miss Sayer, whose information was derived from the said Duchess of Gordon, a staunch supporter of the king and Pitt.

‘A few days ago,’ says Miss Sayer, ‘Mrs. Richard Walpole gave a supper to the two princes, Mrs. Fitzherbert, Colonel Fullarton, Jack Payne—who is such a favourite he is to be a Lord of the Admiralty, and leans on the prince as he walks, not the prince on him—Miss Vanneck and a few others. The Duchess of Gordon the only Pittite. The prince says, “What a fine fellow my brother York is! He never forsakes me. The other day, when we went to look for the king’s money, jewels, &c., at Kew, as we opened the drawers, my mother looked very uneasy and grew angry. Says York to her, “Madam, I believe you are as much deranged as the king.” Then says Jack Payne, after a great many invectives against Mr. Pitt, calling him William the Fourth, William the Conqueror, &c., “Mr. Pitt’s chastity will protect the queen,” which was received by all present as a very good thing. The Duchess of Gordon—for which you will like her, though

a Scotchwoman—declared, if they began to abuse the queen, she would leave the room.’

But at Brookes’ Club indecent abuse of the king, queen, and Pitt was indulged in without reserve; and a cant phrase used at the whist table was, ‘I play the lunatic’ (the king).

The contest between the two political factions increased daily. The ladies who espoused the prince’s cause wore Regency caps, badges, and ribbons emblematic of their party; whilst their more loyal sisters refused to attend their private entertainments or visit them.

Parliament assembled on November 20, but was again adjourned till December 4, in consequence of the king’s condition; when it met on that date, both parties agreed to appoint a select committee to examine the king’s physicians regarding the probable length which his madness might last. Six days later, the reports of the committee which declared His Majesty to be incapable of meeting parliament, or transacting any business, were laid upon the table of the House of Commons, when Pitt brought in a ‘plan of Regency,’ according to which the management of the king, and of the royal household

and all appointments concerning it, should be vested in the queen; the royal authority being exercised by the Prince of Wales under certain restrictions. These were that the prince was not to dispose of the king's real or personal property, nor grant any pensions, nor any office in revision, nor create any peers. Such restrictions were exactly those which the prince and his friends dreaded, and which they were now determined to oppose by might and main. Accordingly, Charles Fox rose to his feet, and, in an excited speech, declared the Prince of Wales had 'as clear a right to assume the reins of government, and fully exercise the powers of sovereignty, as if His Majesty had undergone a perfect and natural demise.'

Pitt listened, with a smile of satisfaction, to these bold expressions, which, he felt convinced, were far more damning to the prince's party than any argument of which he could make use; leaning across to the Treasury bench, he whispered to a friend, 'I'll un-whig that gentleman for the rest of his life.' No sooner had Fox sat down, than his opponent rose. The doctrine, he said, they had just listened to was little less

than treason to the Constitution. He 'met the claim of right preferred on behalf of the heir-apparent with a positive contradiction, and denied that, under the circumstances, the Prince of Wales had any more right to assume the government than any other person in the kingdom. It was the province of Parliament, and of Parliament alone, to make provision for the government of the country, whenever any interruption of the royal authority took place.'

In a subsequent debate on this momentous question, Fox once more made a remark which by no means served the interests of his party. Pitt, he avowed, would have proposed no limitation on the power of the regent, unless he had been certain that there would be a change of ministry; and that, conscious of not having deserved the favour of the prince, he was envious of his successors, and desirous to obstruct their credit. Pitt's reply was at once spirited and prompt.

'As to my being conscious,' he said, 'that I do not deserve the favour of the prince, I can only say that I know but one way in which I, or any man, could deserve it, by having uni-

formly endeavoured in a public situation to do my duty to the king, his father, and to the country at large. If, in thus endeavouring to deserve the confidence of the prince, it should appear that I, in fact, have lost it, however painful and mortifying that circumstance may be to me, and from whatever cause it may proceed, I may indeed regret it, but I will boldly say it is impossible I should ever repent it.'

Whilst the Regency Bill was before Parliament, the prince lost no time in seeking friends to support his cause, an effort in which he was of course seconded by his brother; the latter held a meeting in his own house, to confer with the Opposition, as the prince's political followers were styled, and made a speech, neither remarkable for eloquence or intelligibleness, in favour of granting full powers to the regent. Indeed, the prince now caused the report to be spread that he would not accept the regency under any restrictions; furthermore, both he and his friends declared the king's madness was hopelessly incurable.

The conduct of the royal brothers now became, if possible, more reckless and dissipated

than before; hopeful of the success of their plans, they enjoyed themselves without restraint; dined publicly with their friends, and were seen at night continually at Brookes', where they gambled and got drunk.

'The behaviour of the two princes,' Mr. Granville writes to the Marquis of Buckingham, 'is such as to shock every man's feelings If we were together, I could tell you some particulars of the Prince of Wales' behaviour towards the king and queen within these few days that would make your blood run cold.'

Lord Bulkeley adds his testimony.

'The princes,' he says, 'go on in their usual style, both keeping open houses, and employing every means in their power to gain proselytes; attending the Beefsteak Club, Freemason's meetings, &c. . . . The Duke of York never misses a night at Brookes', where the hawks pluck his feathers unmercifully, and have reduced him to the vowels I O U.'

It may be mentioned here that, eighteen months after the duke's return from Germany, he was indebted to his creditors for the sum of £60,000.

So assured was the prince that his hour of triumph was at hand that he already named some of his Ministers of State; the Duke of York was to be appointed Commander-in-Chief; Sheridan, Treasurer of the Navy; Fox, one of the Secretaries of State; Earl Spencer, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland; Jack Payne was to be made an admiral at once; and my Lord Loughborough, Lord Chancellor. Concerning this latter appointment, an amusing incident occurred, which is given in the Auckland correspondence, on the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

‘On Friday night an odd thing happened,’ writes his Grace, ‘at a great assembly and ball at Devonshire House, given for all the world. When it was very full, the doors flew open, and “Lord Chancellor” was announced; when lo! Lord Loughborough walked in. The servant probably considered him, and had been used to call him so, three weeks ago.’

The prince not only intended awarding his followers high offices of state, but his liberality went further, and he selected three of them as the future husbands of the three marriageable

princesses ; however, this intended generosity on his part was principally contemplated by way of countenancing his own union with a subject.

The party spirit which divided the town was not long in reaching the royal physicians. A short time after the king's removal to Kew, a fresh medical adviser, in the person of the Rev. Francis Willis, was added to their staff, which was yet further increased a little later on by the addition of his son, Dr. John Willis. The elder was a Lincolnshire clergyman, who had for some years made madness his special study, and who kept a private asylum, where he had given practical proofs of the success of his treatment. Dr. Willis was an honest, simple-minded man, who, happily for his patient, understood more about his case than those who had been, and yet remained, in attendance on him. From their harsh treatment of him, the king regarded them all with an abhorrence which he was ready to extend to his new attendant. When Willis was introduced to him, His Majesty looked at him quietly, and then asked why he had given up his sacred calling for a profession which brought him more worldly profit.

‘Sir,’ answered Willis, ‘our Saviour went about healing the sick.’

‘Yes,’ said the king, sagely, ‘but he did not get seven hundred a year for it.’

His Majesty however soon perceived that this new doctor was of a different type from his colleagues; his mild, firm, and humane treatment worked a beneficial effect on his patient, over whom he quickly gained a strong influence. Even at his second interview the king opened his mind to him, complained of the insolence to which he was subjected by the pages; of not being permitted to see his wife or daughters, of not being allowed the use of a knife, or fork, or razor, fearing he might cut his throat, at which he was most indignant. Dr. Willis soothed him, and promised him all that he required.

‘Your Majesty is too good a Christian, and have too much sense of what you owe your people, to commit such an act,’ he said, handing him a razor, with which the king quietly shaved himself. He likewise allowed him the use of a knife and fork at table, adding that, with His Majesty’s leave, he would have the pleasure of dining with him. Once, when he was walking

in the garden, he looked up wistfully at the windows of the apartments occupied by the princesses; but, seeing no friendly face there, the poor prisoner complained very heavily that his daughters would not show themselves to him. 'In consequence,' Dr. Willis said, in his examination before the Commons Committee, 'the next day I did desire that they should appear, and myself stood at the window with two of the princesses when His Majesty was coming by; and His Majesty showed extravagant joy at the sight of them, though he said his eyes did not suffer him to see the Princess Amelia as well as he could wish.'

But yet the greatest privilege granted him was permission to see the queen, and their meeting was most affecting. He held her hand during the half-hour's interview allowed him, kissed it repeatedly, and took the young Princess Amelia on his knee; to add to his kindness, Dr. Willis had the German page Ernst dismissed.

The improvement which the king made under the care of the Willises was by no means agreeable to the other physicians, headed by Dr.

Warren, who from the first asserted that His Majesty was a confirmed lunatic ; and, having once committed himself to such an opinion, he stoutly maintained it, even to within a few days of the king's perfect restoration, on which occasion he, in the presence of the prince, quarrelled with Sir Lucas Pepys for expressing a doubt regarding the infallibility of his decision.

On the other hand, Dr. Willis held it that the royal patient's recovery was but a question of time ; he even went further, and boldly asserted that, had the king been in a private station, a few weeks would have sufficed to restore his intellect. Dr. Willis was, therefore, looked up to, and lauded by those who ardently hoped for the king's recovery ; whilst Dr. Warren, whose words had greatly influenced the conduct of the princes and their friends, was believed in and relied on by them. As may be supposed, Warren was continually finding fault with Willis's treatment of the king, and, during one of the inquiries as to His Majesty's health by the Commons Committee, the former complained that he had one day found His Majesty reading 'King Lear,' and, when he had asked

who it was that gave it to him, the king had stated it was Dr. Willis. This Willis denied, not that he was really guilty of falsehood, but because the shrewdness of his patient deceived him.

His Majesty had urgently requested Willis to let him read this play, in which he fancied he saw a parallel between the sad old king and himself; but this the doctor, though indulgent in many ways, at once refused. The king pressed him no further, but, after a while, begged that he might be allowed a copy of Colman's works, in which he was aware 'King Lear,' as altered and 'corrected'! by Colman, was included. Dr. Willis was ignorant of this, and granted the request.

When, some time after, the king's daughters came to visit him, he spoke much to them of 'King Lear.'

'The play is very beautiful, very affecting, very awful,' he said, sadly. 'I am like poor Lear,' he added; 'but, thank God, I have no Regan, no Goneril, but three Cordelias.'

Meanwhile, the Regency Bill was before Parliament. The second examination of the doctors

took place in January; Warren declared, if there was any change in the king, it was for the worse; Willis expressed himself of a contrary opinion, and was severely cross-examined by the princes' friends who sat on the committee, and occasionally censured him. It was even insinuated that he was acting in collusion with the queen, in order to misrepresent His Majesty's condition, and so defeat the prince's claims. The bill, however, passed the Commons, and was carried to the Lords on February 12.

The opposition, having exhausted their efforts to gain better terms for the regent, were now anxious the bill should pass as quickly as possible, in order that they might come into power without further delay. But, before it could receive the sanction of the Lords, a sudden and favourable change was reported in the king, and Willis announced his patient convalescent. As early as February 2, Miss Burney had encountered His Majesty by accident in the garden, and she at once turned to run away, but found that the king, followed by his doctors and attendants, pursued her, shouting out her name repeatedly.

‘I protest,’ says the authoress, ‘I was ready to die. I knew not in what state he might be at the time; I only knew the orders to keep out of his way were universal; that the queen would highly disapprove any unauthorised meeting, and that the very action of my running away might deeply, in his present irritable state, offend him. Nevertheless, on I ran, too terrified to stop, and in search of some short passage—for the garden is full of little labyrinths—by which I might escape.’

But, as she ran, she heard Dr. Willis calling out at the pitch of his voice for her to stop; to which she answered back, in her fright, ‘I cannot! I cannot!’

Then came the doctor’s reply, ‘You must, ma’am; it hurts the king to run.’ On which she stopped short, and then His Majesty came up, and, in his delight at seeing one of his household again, he kissed her on the cheek and embraced her. Then, motioning the attendants and the doctors away, he walked by her side, asking her many questions in a very rational way, and speaking of those who had joined the opposition; he seemed to have ‘just

such remains of his flightiness as heated his imagination without deranging his reason.'

It was but ten days after this interview that Willis pronounced him cured; Warren, of course, jealously refused to agree with him in this opinion, and the other doctors maintained a cautious reserve. Willis, therefore, boldly came forward and declared to the Lord Chancellor that the king's state was such that the Regency Bill ought not to be proceeded with. Thurlow informed him he did not believe it; when Willis said he would publish the king's restoration, and threatened the Lord Chancellor with impeachment, if he dared to act on the assumption of the king's incapacity. The result of this was, the Chancellor had an interview that lasted two hours with His Majesty, which satisfied him that Willis was right, and the bill was therefore abandoned. On February 23, 1789, the king wrote to Pitt announcing his recovery; and three days later the last bulletin was issued declaring 'the entire cessation of His Majesty's illness,' and was signed by Dr. Willis, Sir George Barker, and Sir Lucas Pepys.

This sudden convalescence gave a turn to

political affairs which neither the prince nor his supporters expected, and great was their discomfort thereat; at first they refused to believe it, but when it could be no longer denied, they were plunged into deep confusion. Edmund Burke, one of His Royal Highness's most enthusiastic supporters, became almost mad from disappointment; Charles Fox, who had been ailing for some time, grew seriously ill; and the princes, according to Lord Bulkeley, were 'quite desperate, and endeavoured to drown their cares, disappointments, and internal chagrin in wine and dissipation.' The Duke of York, he adds, 'plays much at tennis, and has a score with all the blacklegs; and in the public Court tells them they shall be paid as soon as his father can settle with him some Osnaburgh money which he owes him.'

When the king's recovery was fully established, the princes became anxious to see him, in order that they might, if possible, disabuse his mind of all prejudice which their conduct was calculated to cause; accordingly they intimated a desire to see their father, who agreed to receive them, and, as he wrote to Pitt after

the interview, 'choose the meeting should be in the queen's apartments, that all parties might have that caution which at the present hour could but be judicious.' The hour appointed by the king for their meeting was one o'clock, but, their Royal Highnesses having been rioting and drunk at a masquerade the previous night, did not arrive at Kew before half-past two. The king embraced them both, and shed tears; the visit lasted but half an hour, and care was taken, as the king said, 'that the conversation should be general and cordial. They seemed satisfied,' he added.

Lord Bulkeley writes, 'Lord Winchelsea, who was at Kew the whole time, told me that, when they came out, they told Colonel Digby that they were delighted with the king's being so well, and remarked that two things in the half-hour's conference which they had with him had struck them very forcibly; that he had observed to them how much better he played at piquet than Mr. Charles Hawkins, and that, since he had been ill, he had rubbed up all his Latin; and these facts, which are facts, I expect to hear magnified by the Carlton House runners into instances of insanity.'

The day after the prince's visit, Mr. Grenville writes to Lord Buckingham: 'The two princes were at Kew yesterday, and saw the king in the queen's apartment. She was present the whole time, a precaution for which, God knows, there was too much reason. They kept him waiting a considerable time before they arrived; and, after they left him, drove immediately to Mrs. Armstead's, in Park Street, in hopes of finding Fox there, to give him an account of what had passed. He not being in town, they amused themselves yesterday evening with spreading about a report that the king was still out of his mind, and in quoting phrases of his, to which they gave that turn. It is certainly a decent and becoming thing that, when all the king's physicians, all his attendants, and his two principal ministers agree in pronouncing him well, his two sons should deny it. And the reflection that the Prince of Wales was to have had the government, and the Duke of York the command of the army during his illness, makes the representation of his actual state, when coming from them, more peculiarly proper and edifying.

I bless God that it is yet some time before these matured and ripened virtues will be visited upon us in the form of a government.'

The prince's friends, as usual, took their cue from him; when the king's name was mentioned, they shook their heads, admitted with some hesitation His Majesty was better, but were generally inclined to assert, with Lord Rawdon, that, though the king was tranquil on ordinary subjects, 'there were certain strings which will, whenever they are touched, produce false music again.'

On March 9, the royal physicians left Kew, and on the evening of the following day, there was a general illumination on a magnificent scale of the streets, squares, and suburbs of London. Signs of the people's joy and satisfaction at the king's recovery, or more strictly speaking, at being delivered from the reign of the regent, were universal. The whole city was one blaze of light from end to end, literally extending from Hampstead and Highgate to Clapham, from Greenwich to Kensington; there was no house that did not bear some decoration, no window that was not lighted; even the

cobblers' stalls in the streets exhibited rows of farthing candles. The thoroughfares were thronged with crowds; in the midst of which the queen and her daughters drove, gratified by the scenes that everywhere met their gaze.

On this night, the prince and Duke of York, having dined heartily, were on their way to the opera in His Royal Highness's carriage, which, in some of the narrow streets, got blocked up amongst other coaches. The mob, soon recognising the princes, called out, 'God save the king;' when the prince let down the glass of his coach, and joined in the cry. Then one sturdy fellow asked him to call out, 'Pitt for ever. God bless Pitt;' which the prince refused, but shouted out, 'Fox for ever. God bless Fox.' The mob, incensed at this, insisted on him crying, 'Pitt for ever;' but the prince angrily said, 'Damn Pitt. Fox for ever.' This was too much for the crowd, then in a state of great excitement. One man sought to pull the coach door open, on which the prince, now much frightened, endeavoured to jump out and escape, but the Duke of York held him back, hit the man a blow on the head, and called

to the coachman to drive on, which he was now enabled to do at a great pace, the door of the carriage flapping about as they went.

When the opera was over, the prince, who had met some of his friends, and was in excellent spirits, declared he would walk through the crowd to Carlton House; and when he arrived there, he insisted on walking through the streets to see the illuminations. After some time, his friends first persuaded him to call at Brookes', when they pushed their way, in a right merry fashion, through Pall Mall. At St. James's, he fell in with a gang of butchers, with marrow-bones and cleavers, who began to play before him, and clear the way for him, shouting and performing all the way up St. James's Street, and giving him three cheers when he reached his destination, in return for which civility he gave them ten guineas. He then tarried some time at the club, from where he was persuaded by his friends to drive home; an advice with which he was obliged to comply.

A few days after this general rejoicing, the king and his family returned to Windsor, and he then announced his intention of celebrating

his recovery by a public thanksgiving. Many of his friends sought to dissuade him from this design, fearing the excitement might produce an ill effect on his mind; amongst whom was his Grace of Canterbury.

‘My Lord Archbishop,’ answered the king, ‘I have thrice read over the evidence of the physicians on my case, and, if I can stand that, I can stand anything.’

The ceremony was therefore fixed for April 23, on which day the king, accompanied by the queen and princesses, his brothers, the Dukes of Cumberland and Gloucester, and his sons, the Prince of Wales, Duke of York, and Prince William, and attended by the Lords and Commons, and great officers of the State, went to St. Paul’s. The procession set out at eight o’clock in the morning, headed by the Members of the House of Commons in their coaches, who were followed by the Masters of Chancery, judges, and peers, such of the latter as were knights wearing the collars of their respective orders; finally, came the royal family, attended by the Horse Guards, the king’s coach being drawn by eight cream-coloured

horses. The streets through which the stately procession passed, were lined by the Foot Guards as far as Temple Bar, and by the Artillery Company and City Militia from thence to St. Paul's. Dense and anxious crowds pressed forward to see and greet the king; balconies were erected along the way, and decorated with coloured cloths; the church steeples were hung with flags and streamers; bells rang incessantly, and the cannon thundered from the Tower and St. James's.

At Temple Bar the king was met by the Lord Mayor in a crimson velvet gown, accompanied by the sheriffs in scarlet gowns, and by a deputation from the aldermen and common council, being all on horseback; the Lord Mayor surrendered the City sword to His Majesty, who returned it to his good keeping, when his lordship carried it bare-headed before his sovereign to St. Paul's. The king looked tranquil and well, though somewhat thinner than before his illness, and was much affected by the demonstration of joy which greeted him. He was dressed in the Windsor uniform, the queen and princesses being arrayed in blue silks trimmed

with white, and bandeaux inscribed, 'God save the king.'

As the procession moved slowly through Pall Mall, His Majesty was received with but slight applause, but the Prince of Wales, who had stationed his partisans there for the purpose, was loudly cheered, as he was likewise in parts of the Strand, where he had also posted his friends and dependents; but from Cockspur Street to St. Paul's the huzzas which met the king were hearty and continual, which caused His Royal Highness to lose his temper completely, and he never recovered it afterwards, 'for at St. Paul's,' says Lord Bulkeley, 'he was in the worst humour possible, and did everything he could to expose himself in the face of an amazing concourse of persons, and of all the foreign ministers.'

Arrived at the great cathedral, the king was met at the west door by the Bishops of London and Lincoln, between whom he walked, preceded by the Marquis of Stafford carrying the sword of state. Scarcely had he entered when the pure fresh voices of five thousand children burst in a loud thanksgiving chorus on his ears ;

for a moment the king's feelings were stirred to their depths, he covered his face with his hands and silently wept. He, however, soon recovered himself. 'Now,' he whispered to the Bishop of Lincoln, 'I feel that I have been ill.' He took his seat by the queen under a canopy of state near the west end, opposite the altar. There in the presence of the peers and peeresses of the realm, the foreign ministers, officers of state, and members of the House of Commons, he returned humble thanksgiving for his recovery; but during these solemn moments, when the queen and princesses and many present could not restrain their tears, the Prince of Wales, his brothers, and his uncles, in the face of that vast concourse, 'talked to each other the whole time of the service,' as Lord Bulkeley writes, 'and behaved in such an indecent manner that was quite shocking.' Nor was this all. When the service was concluded, the prince, without waiting for the king, rushed to his carriage, and, attended by a number of the mob, drove off, leaving the remainder of the procession to accompany His Majesty.

The town now became for a while the scene of

vast gaiety : crowds thronged to St. James's to offer their congratulations to the king, and amongst others came some of the followers of the Prince of Wales. One of the king's friends, looking one day at a group of these in the royal drawing-room, said, quietly,

'Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis.'

'Yes,' said a friend, who overheard him, '*the king's recovered, thanks to Doctor Willis.*'

The queen gave a magnificent ball, which was succeeded by superb entertainments by the Spanish and French ambassadors. At that given by the latter, Her Majesty, the princesses, the Prince of Wales, and his two brothers were present, but these gentlemen would 'neither dance nor stay to supper, lest they should have the appearance of paying the smallest attention to Her Majesty.' White's club, frequented by Pitt and his supporters, was not behindhand in doing honour to the occasion, and resolved to give a fête at the Pantheon to celebrate the double event of the king's birthday and recovery. The queen and princesses signified their intention of being present, and the entertainment was to be given on a scale of great splendour ; in order to render

it as select as possible, the price of the tickets was fixed at three guineas and a half each. The ladies who were to attend determined to show their loyalty, and resolved to dress all in white, and wear on the fronts of their head-dresses the motto, 'God save the king,' in letters of gold.

Whilst all these preparations were being made, the prince used every exertion to keep his friends away from the fête, and sent round to canvass the non-attendance of everyone of his party; when tickets were forwarded to him and the Duke of York, they accepted them, but sent them immediately to Hookham's Library in Bond Street, to be sold to anyone who would buy them. The club committee, hearing of this indignity, adopted a regulation that every member who presented tickets should sign them, in order to keep the company amongst which the queen and her daughters were to mix select; but, their Royal Highnesses hearing of this, the Duke of York instantly sent for the tickets, and wrote his name on the backs of them when they were sold. On the same night that this fête in honour of his father was held, the officers of the Guards got up a ball expressly for this gracious

youth, the female guests at which were noted courtesans.

The conduct of both the princes indeed sorely grieved their parents, to whom, under the mask of attention, they showed every possible insult. The behaviour of the Prince of Wales did not surprise his father, who had ample proof of it before his illness; but that his favourite son, the Duke of York, should follow so closely in his brother's infamous ways was a bitter pang. 'It kills me—it goes to my soul; I know not how to bear it,' was His Majesty's expression when speaking of the duke's open contempt for him. The queen publicly resented their insults, as might be expected, and looked coldly on those who had sided with them during the king's madness. Amongst such was included Dr. Watson, Bishop of Llandaff. When this Right Reverend Father in God believed the king's recovery was impossible, he stood up in the House of Lords and delivered himself of a learned speech, declaring the full powers of His Majesty should be vested without restraint in the disreputable regent.

It may be mentioned that at the time the

holy man was inspired with these sentiments, the snug See of St. Asaph had just become vacant; which would be in the prince's power to bestow when he came into full authority. Nothing daunted by this action so objectionable to Her Majesty, the bishop made his episcopal appearance at an early drawing-room after the recovery, to offer her his congratulations. He had indeed, in the meantime, in conjunction with his clergy, presented addresses to their Majesties expressive of his gratitude to God for the restoration to health which had been so mercifully vouchsafed to his gracious sovereign, and of his admiration for Her Majesty's 'amiableness and purity as a queen, as a wife, and as a mother.'

So much eloquence had not, however, the effect of soothing the royal lady's wrath, and she received the holy man, as he tells us, 'with a degree of coldness which would have appeared to herself ridiculous and ill-placed, could she have imagined how little a mind such as mine regarded, in its honourable proceedings, the displeasure of a woman, though that woman happened to be a queen.'

The Prince of Wales was standing by on this occasion, and knowing Her Majesty's reasons for slighting the bishop, he went forward, spoke to him in a manner more than usually friendly, and invited him to dinner. But his Grace, though flattered by such extreme courtesy, hesitated before consenting to step within the threshold of such a disreputable mansion as Carlton House; when His Royal Highness turned to Sir Thomas Dundas and desired him to give a dinner at his residence, which the good bishop duly attended, and where he had the pleasure of meeting His Royal Highness of York, and several of his boon companions, and of being spoken of by the prince as a man whose talents should never be lost to the public. 'And mind who it is that tells you so,' said His Highness, in the excess of his after-dinner friendship and condescension.

But this was by no means the only slight which Her Majesty administered to those who had supported the opposition; none such were invited to her parties at Buckingham House, a discourtesy which on one occasion at least was extended to her sons, to whom she wrote that

they would be welcome to her concert, but that the entertainment to follow was intended for those who had supported the king on a late occasion. The princes in return abused their gracious mother in round terms, and, according to Lady Harcourt's diary, slandered the princesses in a manner too gross to be repeated in these pages. The ill-feeling between the royal mother and her sons was strengthened on the occasion of the duel fought between the Duke of York and Colonel Lennox of the Coldstream Guards, nephew and successor of Charles, Duke of Richmond.

The royal duke had, at a public masquerade, said that 'language had been used at D'Aubigny's Club towards Colonel Lennox to which no gentleman ought to submit.' This imputation of cowardice was 'made to a masque,' upon the supposition that it covered the person of Colonel Lennox. Next day, May 15, being a field-day of the Coldstream Guards, Colonel Lennox stepped up to the duke, and asked him for an explanation of his words. In answer, His Royal Highness, who was his superior officer, briefly ordered him to return

to his post. After parade, he summoned Colonel Lennox, and, in the orderly-room, before the officers, asked him to state his complaint; upon this the colonel demanded an explanation, which the duke refused. Colonel Lennox then wrote to every member of the club, desiring each of them to let him know if he could recollect any expression to have been used in his presence which could bear the construction put upon it by the duke. No member remembering to have heard such, Colonel Lennox once more demanded either an explanation or satisfaction. His Royal Highness being unable to give the former, was—unless he wished to brand himself as a coward—compelled to give the latter.

A duel was therefore arranged to take place on Wimbledon Common. Lord Rawdon, the Prince of Wales's friend, acted as the duke's second, and the Earl of Winchelsea, one of the lords of the king's bed-chamber, attended Colonel Lennox. The duke did not discharge his pistol, but a ball from his adversary's grazed a curl at the side of his royal head. After this narrow escape, Lord Winchelsea strove to

induce the duke to give Colonel Lennox an explanation of his words; but this he doggedly refused, and even declined to repeat the usual phrase, that he believed his antagonist to be a man of honour and courage. He had not fired, he said, nor was it his intention to fire; but the colonel might repeat his fire, if he chose. This was, of course, out of the question. They therefore left the common, and this duel, which ended in this unsatisfactory manner, had the effect of lowering the royal duke in the eyes of his friends and the people generally.

When the duel was over, the gallant duke returned to Carlton House, where he found the prince walking about the yard in great agitation, impatiently waiting news of the result. 'It is all over,' the duke said, coming up to him coolly, 'and all is quite well; but I have not time to tell you the particulars; for I must go to the tennis-court.' The prince expressed his desire that the tennis-court might go to regions uncomfortably warm, and wished to hear the full details. When he received these, he set off for Kew, where the king was, and

sent up a message to say he wished to see His Majesty alone. 'Very well, very well,' said the monarch; 'but I want just to go up to the queen first.'

When he received the prince, not only Her Majesty, but the princesses, were present. The prince said he had something particular to say, and begged that the princesses might retire. He then fully related the occurrence which had led to the duel, and turning to the queen, said, 'Madame, you know I acquainted you with these circumstances a week ago;' which he had, in order that the duel might be stopped by authority. The king said, 'Ah, indeed! I never heard a word of it before.' When he described the duke's escape, she calmly, and without the slightest discomposure, looked out of the window.

The affair soon got spoken of, and caused much sensation in town; but neither Colonel Lennox nor his second received any censure from the Court. Lord Winchelsea was continued in his place as lord of the bed-chamber, and Colonel Lennox was received by the queen next day 'with every mark of graciousness and

favour.' To further indicate her approbation of his conduct, she invited him, soon after the duel, to a Court ball, where she publicly showed him marked attention, and 'kissed her fan to him two or three times, though half the length of the room lay between them.' This had the effect on the princes which was desired; so indignant did the Prince of Wales become, that he made it a subject of complaint to the king.

'Your Majesty is my witness,' he wrote, 'that during the whole relation the queen did not utter a syllable either of alarm at the imminent danger which had threatened the life of my brother but an hour before, of joy and satisfaction at his safety, or of general tenderness and affection towards him, which might appear natural in moments thus afflicting. Nor were these the only testimonies of indifference that I was obliged to observe. For Your Majesty must well remember that the first word the queen pronounced, and the whole tenor of the only conversation she afterwards held, was a defence of Mr. Lennox's conduct, strongly implying a censure on that of my brother.'

CHAPTER II.

The Royal Princes—The Duke of Clarence at the Queen's Lodge—Mrs. Jordan at Richmond—The Wicked Duke of Queensbury—Mrs. Jordan at Bushy Park—Colonel FitzClarence and the Lieutenant—The Duke of York and his Duchess—Trial before the House of Commons—The Duchess of York and her Dogs—The Duke of Sussex and Lady Augusta Murray—The Duke of Cumberland—The Sellis Scandal—The Duke and Lady Graves—The Duke's Marriage—The Queen and the New Duchess.

WITHIN the next few years, some of the royal princes came into prominent notice. Amongst them was the king's third son, William, created Duke of Clarence in 1789, who afterwards came to the throne as William IV. When he had finished his education in Germany, he had been sent into the navy, and made commander of the *Pegase*, but during his father's illness, believing that he would be soon rid of all further governance, he suddenly returned to

town. For the early glimpses we get of him, we are indebted to Miss Burney's faithful and facile pen. When that lady and one of the queen's German attendants, Mrs. Schwollenberg, were one evening seated in a parlour in the queen's lodge at Windsor, the door was opened, and Prince William was announced, entered, drew a chair for himself, and settled down for a chat. The prince was by no means a good figure; in his appearance he resembled the queen's 'elegant plainness,' but in manner he was open and free, and talked volubly, with a thick utterance for which all the royal brothers were alike remarkable.

Mrs. Schwollenberg pitied him from the bottom of her German heart, for the grief he must have felt at the king's illness. The prince responded that he was 'sorry for His Majesty—no man loved the king better; of that they might feel assured—but all sailors loved their king; he was sorry for the queen, too—he was, faith; and agitated when he saw the king first—he could hardly stand.' After these confessions, the princely youth turned to Miss Burney. 'Ma'am,' cried he, 'you have a brother in the service?'

She replied she had, when he turned to Mrs. Schwollenberg and said, 'As long as she has a brother in the service, ma'am, I look upon her as one of us. O faith, I do! I do indeed! She is one of the corps.' He then informed them he had been making acquaintance with a new princess, one he did not remember, Princess Amelia. 'Mary, too,' he said, 'I had quite forgot; and they did not tell me who she was; so I went up to her, and, without in the least recollecting her, she's so monstrously grown, I said, "Pray, ma'am, are you one of the attendants?"'

Shortly after his creation as Duke of Clarence, he went to live at Richmond, not far from Walpole, who describes the residence as 'a house in the middle of a village with nothing but a green short apron to the river, a situation only fit for an old gentlewoman who has put out her knee-pans and love's cards.' Here he entertained a gay and gallant company, amongst whom were the Prince of Wales and Duke of York, Captain Jack Payne, the millionaire Duke of Queensbury, and Mrs. Jordan. This lady, afterwards famous as the mistress of the Duke

of Clarence, was of Irish nationality, having first seen the light of the world in Waterford, a city which also gave birth to Charles Kean. At this period, when she occasionally joined the duke's guests, she was playing at Drury Lane, where her attractions, if not her talents, bade fair to rival those of the great Siddons.

Another of the prince's guests, Lord March, already mentioned, who, on the death of his cousin, Charles, third Duke of Queensbury, succeeded to that title, was remarkable for his voluptuous tastes and general eccentricities. His Grace had been a Lord of the Bed-chamber to the king for twenty-eight years, but during His Majesty's madness had joined the Prince of Wales's party, for which offence he was, on the king's recovery, dismissed from his office, and, to use Lord Sydney's words, they had 'driven him out of England by calling him a rat for deserting his master to hobble after a young prince.' But his Grace did not stay long away from London, and returned to society, to be received with open arms by the princes, Fox, Sheridan, Burke, and other luminaries of the age. His various and conflicting tastes and

characteristics would have been alone sufficient to render him remarkable. My lord duke was a wit, and one who appreciated wit in others, a cultured epicure, a beau whose fastidious toilette and general appointments were looked up to as the standard of good taste, a lover of literature, music, and the arts, a votary of the turf who had ridden famous races, a gambler who had lost large sums and made strange bets, a man of high-bred and courtly manners, of fascinating conversation, a giver of vast charities, and a refined sensualist. In the latter years of his life especially, he surrounded himself by scenes of exquisite vice that lacked little of Oriental splendour to render them supremely voluptuous. Amongst these was his enactment of the *Masque of Paris*.

‘It is a fact,’ says Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, his friend, ‘that the duke performed in his own drawing-room the scene of *Paris and the Goddesses*. Three of the most beautiful females to be found in London presented themselves before him, precisely as the divinities of Homer are supposed to have appeared to Paris on Mount Ida; while he, habited like

the Dardan Shepherd, holding a gilded apple in his hand, conferred the prize on her whom he deemed the fairest. This classic exhibition took place at his house opposite the Green Park.'

His Grace of Queensbury was at Richmond at the time the Duke of Clarence lived in the residence 'only fit for an old gentlewoman.' The ducal villa was furnished with all that the luxurious taste of its owner could suggest or desire, and commanded a charming view of the Thames, an advantage which he did not appreciate. The famous William Wilberforce, when a young man, dined with the duke at Richmond.

'The party,' he says, 'was select; Pitt, Lord and Lady Chatham, the Duchess of Gordon, and George Selwyn (who lived for society, and continued in it till he looked really like the wax-work figure of a corpse) were amongst the guests. We dined early, that some of our party might be ready to attend the opera. The dinner was sumptuous, the views from the villa quite enchanting, and the Thames in all its glory; but the duke looked on with in-

difference. "What is there," he said, "to make so much of in the Thames? I am quite tired of it—there it goes; flow, flow, flow, always the same."'

Horace Walpole held a vastly different opinion. In describing a boat-race which he witnessed, in company with the Duke of Clarence, Lady Diana Beauclerk, Lord Robert Spencer, and others, he says,

'The scene, both up the river and down, was what only Richmond upon earth can exhibit. The crowds on those green velvet meadows and on the shores; the yachts, barges, pleasure and small boats, and the windows and gardens lined with spectators were so delightful that, when I came home from that vivid show, I thought Strawberry looked as dull and solitary as a hermitage.'

Though he saw much company here, the Duke of Clarence lived far more regularly than either of his brothers, a fact that gave him a greater claim to popularity.

'He pays his bills regularly himself,' writes Walpole; 'locks up his doors at night, that his servants may not stay out late at night;

and never drinks but a few glasses of wine. Though the value of crowns is mightily fallen of late at market, it looks as if His Royal Highness thought they were still worth waiting for ; nay, it is said that he tells his brothers that he shall be king before either of them. This is fair, at least.'

This letter was written in 1789, and, forty years after, the duke came to the throne.

But His Royal Highness did not, on all occasions, confine himself to a few glasses of wine, and one of the most amusing chapters in Miss Burney's diary gives an account of him when he had dined with the king at St. James's, on His Majesty's birthday, 1791. Leaving the royal table, he came into the apartment where Mrs. Schwellenberg, Miss Burney, Miss Goldsworthy, Mr. De Luc, a scientific man and a favourite of the queen, and Mr. Stanhope, one of Her Majesty's equerries, were dining. When the duke—who was, as the Schwellenberg afterwards described him, 'really ver' merry ; vat you call tipsy'—entered the apartment, they all, in accordance with Court etiquette, stood up, and the footmen left the room ; but he

ordered them all to sit down, and called back the servant, to hand about some wine. He then placed himself at the head of the table next the Schwellenberg, looking very good-humoured, but somewhat comical. Miss Burney's words shall tell the rest.

“Well, this is the first day I have ever dined with the king at St. James's on his birthday. Pray, have you all drunk His Majesty's health?”

“No, your Roy'l Highness; your Roy'l Highness might make dem do dat,” said Mrs. Schwellenberg.

“Oh, by — will I! Here, you” (to the footman), “bring champagne! I'll drink the king's health again, if I die for it! Yet I have done pretty well already; so has the king, I promise you; I believe His Majesty was never taken such good care of before; we have kept his spirits up, we have enabled him to go through his fatigues; and I should have done more still, but for the ball and Mary—I have promised to dance with Mary.”

‘Champagne being now brought for the duke, he ordered it all round. When it came to me, I whispered to Westerhaults to carry it on; the

duke slapped his hand violently on the table, and cried out, “Oh, you shall drink it.”

‘There was no resisting this. We all stood up, and the duke sonorously gave the royal toast.

“And now,” cried he, making us all sit down again, “where are my rascals of servants? I shan’t be in time for the ball; besides, I’ve got a deuced tailor waiting to fix on my epaulette! Here, you, go and see for my servants—d’ye here? Scamper off!” Off ran William. “Come, let’s have the king’s health again. De Luc, drink it. Here, champagne to De Luc!”

‘I wish you could have seen Mr. De Luc’s mixed simper, half pleased, half alarmed. However, the wine came, and he drank it, the duke taking a bumper for himself at the same time.

“Poor Stanhope!” cried he; “Stanhope shall have a glass too. Here, champagne! What are you all about? Why don’t you give champagne to poor Stanhope?”

‘Mr. Stanhope, with great pleasure, complied, and the duke again accompanied him.

“Come hither, do you hear?” cried the duke to the servants; and on the approach, slow and

submissive, of Mrs. Stainforth's man, he hit him a violent slap on the back, calling out, "Hang you! why don't you see for my rascals?"

'Away flew the man, and then he called out to Westerhaults,

"Hark 'ee! bring another glass of champagne to Mr. De Luc."

'Mr. De Luc knows these royal youths too well to venture at so vain an experiment as disputing with them; so he only shrugged his shoulders and drank the wine. The duke did the same.

"And now, poor Stanhope," cried the duke, "give another glass to poor Stanhope; d'ye hear?"

"Is not your Royal Highness afraid," cried Mr. Stanhope, displaying the full circle of his borrowed teeth, "I shall be apt to be rather up in the world, as the folks say, if I tope on at this rate?"

"Not at all. You can't get drunk in a better cause. I'd get drunk myself if it was not for the ball. Here, champagne; another glass for the philosopher! I keep sober for Mary."

"Oh, your Royal Highness!" cried Mr. De

Luc, gaining courage as he drank, "you will make me quite droll of it if you make me go on—quite droll!"

"So much the better—so much the better; it will do you a monstrous deal of good. Here, another glass of champagne for the queen's philosopher."

'Mr. De Luc obeyed, and the duke then addressed Mrs. Schwollenberg's George.

"Here, you! you! why, where is my carriage? Run and see; do you hear?"

'Off hurried George, grinning irrepressibly.

"If it was not for that deuced tailor, I would not stir. I shall dine at the Queen's House on Monday, Miss Goldsworthy; I shall come to dine with the Princess Royal. I find she does not go to Windsor with the queen."

'Some talk then ensued upon the duke's new carriage, which they all agreed to be the most beautiful that day at Court, when he remembered it was necessary to drink the queen's health. The gentlemen here made no demur, though Mr. De Luc arched his eyebrows in expressive fear of consequences.

"A bumper," cried the duke, "to the queen's gentleman-usher."

‘They all stood up and drank the queen’s health.

“Here are three of us,” cried the duke, “all belonging to the queen; the queen’s philosopher, the queen’s gentleman-usher, and the queen’s son; but, thank heaven, I’m nearest.”

“Sir,” cried Mr. Stanhope, a little affronted, “I am not now the queen’s gentleman-usher; I am the queen’s equerry, sir.”

“A glass more champagne here! What are you all so slow for? Where are all my rascals gone? They’ve put me in one passion already this morning. Come, a glass of champagne for the queen’s gentleman-usher, and another glass to the queen’s philosopher.”

Neither gentleman objected; but Mrs. Schwel-
lenberg, who had sat laughing and happy
all this time, now grew alarmed, and said,

“Your Royal Highness, I am afraid for the ball.”

“Hold your potato-jaw, my dear,” cried the duke, patting her, but recollecting himself, he took her hand, and pretty abruptly kissed it, and then, flinging it hastily away, laughed aloud, and called out, “There, that will make

amends for anything; so now I may say what I will. So, here, a glass of champagne for the queen's philosopher and the queen's gentleman-usher! Hang me, if it will not do them a monstrous deal of good."

'Then news was brought him that his carriage was ready, and off he went.'

In the year in which the above scene took place, Mrs. Jordan, who had already been the mistress of Ford the proprietor of Drury Lane Theatre, and the mother of his four children, left him to become the protégée of the duke, who promised to allow her a thousand a year, at which piece of generosity the king was much incensed.

'What, what—you keep an actress?' said His Majesty to the duke.

'Yes, sir,' he answered, readily enough.

'How much do you allow her? What, what!'

'A thousand a year.'

'A thousand a year!' said His Gracious Majesty, in astonishment. 'What—what; that's too much. Give her five hundred. What—what—what?'

It happened, however, that the actress de-

rived no pecuniary benefit from her royal lover's promise ; her professional earnings amounted to no less than £5,000 a year, to which she added an annuity of £1,000, settled on her by a relative of her mother's. Soon after she had formed a connection with the duke, it was noticed that, when she drove to the treasury door of the theatre to receive her salary, she was invariably accompanied by this scion of royalty, whom public gossip plainly said appropriated her earnings ; nay, it was even proved after her death that her nightly salaries at Drury Lane were constantly paid in advance, and the sums received by a messenger, who hurried with them to a gambling-house in Pall Mall, where the duke played for night stakes, or to his residence in St. James's Street. It was well known that before her intimacy with him commenced, she had saved a handsome fortune, and it is a fact in her biographical history that she died abroad in neglect, and, if not in poverty, at least in debt. Though continually suffering from public slights in consequence of her relationship with the duke, that worthy did not think well of allow-

ing the mother of his children to withdraw into the seclusion of private life, whilst her labours brought such a profitable return to the royal coffers.

As an instance of one of the insults she frequently met with, she used to repeat with characteristic humour, the impertinence she once received from an Irish servant of the duke’s, whom she found it necessary to dismiss. When she had paid the man, he took up a shilling, and, ringing it on the table, said as he looked at her slyly,

‘Arrah now, me honey, with this thirteener, won’t I sit in the gallery, an’ won’t your royal grace give me a courtesy, an’ won’t I give Your Royal Highness a howl an’ a hiss into the bargain for nothin’ at all.’

Mrs. Jordan resided at Bushey Park, and here it was, in celebration of one of the duke’s birthdays, that the prince and his mistress received a royal and fashionable company. The fête is reported in several of the newspapers of the day, and at great length in the *Courier*, from which the following account and extracts are taken. Comment on the princely taste of the

host and of the society of the period is needless. Bushey House had been specially fitted up for this occasion; the servants were in new liveries, and in the grounds and gardens the bands of the Dukes of York and Kent discoursed sweet music.

‘About five o’clock the Prince of Wales, the Dukes of York, Kent, Sussex, and Cambridge, Colonel Paget, &c., arrived from reviewing the German Legion. After they had dressed for dinner, they walked in the pleasure-grounds, accompanied by the Lord Chancellor, Earl and Countess of Athlone and daughter, Lord Leicester, Baron Hotham and Lady, Baron Eden, the Attorney General, Colonels Paget and M’Millon, Sergeant Marshall, and a number of other persons. At seven o’clock the second bell announced the dinner, when the prince took Mrs. Jordan by the hand, led her into the dining-room, and seated her at the head of the table. The prince took his seat at her right hand, and the Duke of York at her left; the Duke of Cambridge sat next to the prince, the Duke of Kent next to the Duke of York, and the Lord Chancellor next to His Royal Highness.

The Duke of Clarence sat at the foot of the table . . . The duke's numerous family were introduced and admired by the prince, the royal dukes, and the whole company; an infant in arms, with a most beautiful white head of hair, was brought into the dining room by the nursery maid. After dinner the prince gave, "The Duke of Clarence," which was drunk with three times three; the duke then gave, "The king," which was drunk in a solemn manner. A discharge of cannon from the lawn followed.'

Mrs. Jordan bore the duke ten children, the eldest of whom was raised to the peerage as Earl of Munster, and to the others was granted 'the title and precedency of the younger issue of a marquess.'

This illegitimate progeny became in after-years extremely tenacious of their rank, and singularly haughty in their manners; but occasionally these characteristics were severely checked. A story is told of the second son, Colonel Fitzclarence, who was one day dining at the mess with his regiment, when a young lieutenant was carving fowls in a particularly awkward manner. The colonel looked on with ill-concealed

disgust for some time, and then remarked, sneeringly, 'My father frequently said that to carve well was one of the signs of a gentleman.' The young lieutenant laid down his knife and fork for a minute, and looking the speaker full in the face, coolly asked, 'And pray, Colonel Fitzclarence, what did your mother say?' Profound silence followed the question.

The duke, after some years, grew tired of the mother of his ten children, and coolly discarded her.

'You have probably heard,' writes Fremantle to the Duke of Buckingham, 'all the history of the Duke of Clarence. Before he went to Ramsgate, he wrote to Lady Catherine Long to propose, who wrote him a very proper letter in answer, declining the honour in the most decided terms. After his arrival, he proposed three or four times more, and upon his return to town, sent her an abstract of the Royal Marriage Act altered, as he said it had been agreed to by the Prince of Wales, whom he had consulted, and also conveyed the queen's best wishes and regards—to neither of whom had he said one single word on the subject. Upon

finding she had accepted Pole, he wrote to Lord Keith to propose for Miss Elphinstone, who in her most decided and peremptory terms, rejected him ; he is, notwithstanding, gone to his house. During all this, when he returned to town, he wrote to Mrs. Jordan at Bushey to say she might have half the children, viz., five, and he would allow her £800 per annum. She is most stout in rejecting all compromise till he has paid her what he owes her ; she stating that during the twenty years she has lived with him, he has constantly received and spent all her earnings by acting ; and that she is now a beggar by living with, and at times supporting, him. This she repeats to all the neighbourhood of Bushey, where she remains, and is determined to continue. While all his gallantry was going forward at Ramsgate, the Duke of Cumberland (who must interfere in everything) apprised Mrs. Jordan of what he was doing. Mrs. Jordan then writes him a most furious letter, and another to the Duke of Cumberland, to thank him for the information, and by mistake directs them wrong ; in consequence of which, there has been, of course, a scene between the bro-

thers. Altogether, the conduct of these illustrious personages is a most melancholy and alarming feature in the difficulties which every hour increase upon us; and it is not without great forbearance one can impute it to any other ground but an affection of the same nature as that under which the king labours.'


Later on, the royal duke, who was still anxious to bestow the honour of his hand in marriage, proposed to Miss Wykeham, and the same correspondent, writing on the subject, says,

'There is a grand emotion in the royal family, and with some reason. The Duke of Clarence has thought proper to propose to Miss Wykeham, who has accepted him. The prince, accompanied by the Duchess of Gloucester, went to Windsor on Tuesday to inform the queen of this happy event, who was of course outrageous. The Council have sat twice upon the business, and it is determined, as I understand, to oppose it. My own private belief is that the prince has been encouraging the Duke of Clarence to it at Brighton, and now turns short round upon him, as is usual, finding it so highly objectionable.'

The duke was finally persuaded to break off the match; he was therefore once more available in the matrimonial market, and was finally accepted by a Princess of Saxe-Meiningen, who had no objection to the Jordan scandal and ten illegitimate children.

In September, 1791, the Duke of York was married at Berlin to the Princess Frederica, eldest daughter of Frederick William II., King of Prussia, and was subsequently re-married, in the queen's drawing room at Buckingham House, by the Archbishop of Canterbury in November. Even so good and gracious a courtier as Lord Malmesbury, could not help admitting that the new duchess 'was far from handsome;' but in return for such admission, it was avowed that she was 'lively, sensible, tractable, and formed to confer happiness on her husband.'

The duke and the Prince of Wales had been forgiven by their parents; and had been taken once more into their Majesties' favour. The bridegroom, therefore, to prove his submission to the queen, had left to her selection the nomination of the ladies of his future household—



‘This,’ said the wily Lord Malmesbury, who had suggested the act to His Royal Highness, ‘will relieve the duke from the embarrassment of applications, and particularly such as might be suggested to the prince to make him, which it would be difficult for him to refuse, and from the complexion of the prince’s society, it might be by no means advisable for him to grant, as it is of the last consequence that the duchess should begin well, and under the most respectable impressions possible.’

In a letter written by Miss Dee to Lady Harcourt, preserved in the Harcourt papers, a description is given of the duchess, who attended a ball made by the Duchess of Cumberland.

‘The ball on Monday,’ writes Miss Dee, ‘was *finissimo*. The Duchess of Cumberland brilliant in jewels. The prince, Duke and Duchess of York, and Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester were the royalties. The duchess looked so much better than the first day at Court, I could scarce believe it the same person; she did not even look very little, nor so squeezey and puny; in short, she was almost pretty, and looked elegant in a gauze petticoat and

blue body, and no jewels, or feathers, or flowers. She danced with the prince and the Duke of Clarence; she dances very well and prettily. Her civility is most wonderful; in gestures and expressions she quite puts herself under your feet—a manner that seems most thankful even for being looked at. I inquired, and find it is the Berlin *ton* to be so; it was not the affectation of being gracious, she did it well. People in general were not presented to her; but several were by the prince, Duke of York, &c.; and the Duchess of Cumberland presented Mrs. Fitzherbert. Both squeezed their fans, and talked for a few minutes, and that was all; so this was the first meeting. I did not stay to supper; but heard she sat between the prince and the Duke of Bedford. It is curious that her first exhibition in the world should have been at the Duchess of Cumberland’s.’

The royal bride had a dowry of £30,000, and her kingly father, moreover, paid the debts of her profligate husband, which had amounted to £20,000. A grateful nation had also voted the prince, whose subsequent conduct proved a disgrace to his country, £18,000

per annum, which, added to the sum of £12,000 a year already granted him, and £7,000 a year levied on the Irish establishment, gave him a yearly income of £37,000, all of which soon proved insufficient for his wants. For a while the duke and duchess lived in harmony; she made herself a favourite not only with the royal family, but with all who came in contact with her; she detested ceremony; was fond of retirement, and loved her husband until his glaring vices repelled her. He was not long in accomplishing this. Soon after his marriage, he resumed his connection, as the Duchess of Brunswick told Lord Malmesbury, with a former mistress, a fact which his spouse was graciously inclined to overlook; but his repeated infidelities, and the grossly open manner with which they were conducted, gradually alienated all her affections from him, and in six years after their union they separated, though in the latter years of their lives they lived beneath the same roof.

In 1793, he was placed in command of the English troops which were destined to aid the army under the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg, in

Holland, where he fought with some show of spirit. In the following year, he again embarked for the Continent, to fight the French army under General Pichegru, who forced him to cross the Meuse, and to retreat beyond the Waal. So unsuccessful did his generalship prove, and such a disaster did it cause his country, that Pitt was obliged, in consequence, as he said, of the want of confidence felt by the army in 'his general management,' to insist upon the king recalling this gallant son of Mars from a post for which he proved himself so eminently unsuited.

His Majesty did so with great reluctance, but soothed the royal duke's feelings by creating him, three weeks after his return, Field-marshal and Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's land forces; posts which the death of Lord Amherst, a veteran of four score, had opportunely left vacant for a man his junior by half a century. How the duke was compelled to quit these high offices remains to be told. In 1799 he again commenced a campaign against the French in Holland, heading an army of 35,000 men, including Russians; but here, owing to his

blunders and want of generalship, the greatest disasters befell his troops, and he was compelled to enter into a convention with the French general, by which it was stipulated, that in consideration of the surviving portion of the duke's army being permitted to evacuate Holland, several thousand seamen, then prisoners of war in England, should be given up to the French government.

At home and abroad popular feeling was now excited against him, and his name became a word of reproach; through his fault, it was said, the country had suffered a defeat which lowered her in the eyes of Europe and covered her with disgrace and debt. Pamphlets and ballads of course had much to say concerning the royal duke and his failures; one scurvy rogue wrote of England:

‘ She saw a weak commander lead
Her armies fam'd for valour's meed,
Who ne'er achiev'd one warlike deed,
Or gave his country's foes a trimming;
A swaggering, proud, unwieldy lubber,
Well known for cowardice and blubber,
And only fit to play a rubber
With simp'ring chiefs, or bilk the women.’

But public indignation arrived at its climax

when the royal duke was charged in the House of Commons, by Colonel Guillym Lloyd Wardle, with allowing his mistress, Mrs. Clarke, to sell military commissions and other posts, in the large profits of which His Royal Highness ignominiously shared.

Mrs. Anna Maria Clarke was the daughter of a compositor, and was born in an alley ; in due time she married a bricklayer, from whom she, after a few years spent in conjugal discord, separated ; after many adventures, amorous and otherwise, she became the mistress of Sir James Brudenell, and subsequently of Sir Charles Milner, a coxcomb of the first water. Her intrigues became the public scandal of the day, and attracted the attention of the Duke of York, who immediately became enamoured of her and made her his mistress, promising her £1,000 a year and a retiring pension of £400 per annum, a sum he subsequently refused to pay her.

In person she was elegant and handsome, her complexion was singularly fair, her eyes large and blue ; her conversational powers vivacious, and her manners fascinating. In a short

time her ascendancy over the duke became almost unbounded, and at the trial it was proved beyond a shadow of doubt that at her dictation he had awarded military promotions, granted commissions, and effected exchanges, being well aware that she received large sums from those whom she recommended. 'Nothing,' Earl Temple writes to Lord Buckingham, 'can wipe off from the public mind the first impression of connivance, at least, which the bad character of the woman only tends to strengthen and confirm. I see plainly that the duke is lost in public estimation.' According to Mrs. Clarke's statement before the House of Commons, His Royal Highness had hinted to her that a handsome income might be derived from the sales of commissions. 'The duke,' she said, 'about half a year after I went to Gloucester Place, on my being very much distressed and pressing him for relief, told me *that I had more interest than the queen*, and that if I was *clever*, I need never trouble him for money.' She at once acted on the hint given her, and henceforth nothing could equal the splendour in which she lived; she was clad in purple and fine linen, dined off

services of solid silver, drove in equipages whose appointments rivalled those of royalty itself, and lived in a mansion furnished with superb taste and costly magnificence. From the gross and open insult of the woman's presence, the Duchess of York had retired to Oakenlands; but Mrs. Clarke, desiring a country residence, took a house close to the neighbourhood of the duchess, and on Sundays attended the same church, where her devotion was remarkable.

The excitement, indignation, and triumph which the general public felt at these gross charges which had been long suspected, was intense, and scarce abated during the two months that the parliamentary inquiry lasted. Day after day the House of Commons was crowded; members old and young flocked to hear the extraordinary charges made; to see the fashionable courtesan whose name was on all men's lips stand at the bar of Parliament to implicate her royal lover; to listen to the gross scandal which the witnesses examined coolly disclosed; and to laugh over every *double entendre* which fell from their lips. Never had

there been such an exposure of scenes of profligacy and folly as those which took place between His Royal Highness and his mistress. During the hearing of the case, all signs of dignity and morality seemed set aside in the House of Commons, and the trial was regarded as a sensational drama which was the more interesting from the fame of those it concerned.

Colonel Wardle had undertaken to substantiate his charges, and the facts which the trial elicited proved he had not boasted in vain. He disclaimed all animosity against the Commander-in-Chief, and declared no other motive than a sense of public duty prompted him to bring forward the charge.

‘It was necessary,’ he continued, ‘in the first instance, to put the House in possession of the true purposes for which the disposal of commissions in the army was placed in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief. It was for the purpose of defraying the charges of the half-pay list, for the support of veteran officers, and increasing the Compassionate Fund, for the aid of the widows and orphans of officers; and therefore any commissions which fell by deaths

or promotions, the Commander-in-Chief had no right to sell or dispose of for his own private emolument, nor to appropriate for the like purpose any differences arising from the change or reduction of officers from full to half-pay.'

In the course of the investigation it was proved amongst other transactions that Mrs. Clarke engaged to get her favourite footman appointed to a commission in the army, had received £200 from Colonel Brookes on his exchange being gazetted, and had caused Major Tonym of the 48th Regiment to be appointed major two years after receiving his commission as captain for the sum of £500. Through her aid, Major Shaw, whom the duke disliked, had been appointed Deputy Barrack-Master-General at the Cape of Good Hope on promising to pay her £1,000; the worthy major forwarded her half that sum, and then betrayed an inclination to let her memory fade from his heart; but she was not a woman to allow her friends to forget her, and sent him word of what she considered his just debts, and, on his refusing to pay her, she complained to the duke, who immediately placed the major on the half-pay list. Another

gallant son of Mars, with whom she found an opportunity of transacting a little business, was Colonel French of the Horse Guards, who was appointed to a commission for raising new levies. This officer was introduced to her by Captain Huxley Sanden, and it was arranged between them that she was to have a certain sum out of the bounty for every recruit raised, and a portion of patronage in the nomination of officers.

As the levy went on, she received various amounts; for a majority £900, for a captaincy £700, for a lieutenancy £400, and for an ensigncy £200. Nor did she always expect those who purchased commissions from her to serve; Mr. Mal-ling, a clerk of Greenwood, the army agent, was appointed, through her favour, an ensign, lieutenant, and captain in the Royal African Corps in the space of three years, during which time he never left his desk.

So successful were her friends in the army in gaining rapid promotion that the Church likewise sought her favour, and she ultimately opened an office in the City where army commissions, and places in various departments of the Church and State, were offered at reduced

prices; her clerks making no concealment of the fact that they were employed by the favourite mistress of the Duke of York. Not only were such truths brought to light, but a parcel of documents and papers in connection with these transactions were seized and submitted to the inspection of a select committee.

‘The report’ (of these) ‘is not yet made,’ writes Earl Temple in the ‘Courts and Cabinets of George III.,’ ‘but Leach, the chairman, has told me that the scene of infamy they open is dreadful, and that all that has passed is a trifle when compared with them. A complete system of traffic of every sort, for votes in the House upon particular questions, for every sort of military appointment, is laid open—a statement of particular facts which could only have come to her knowledge from the Duke of York; repeated directions to Sandon to call at the office, where he will find such and such official letters for him. A complaint on the part of the duke that she has not been dealt fairly by, in consequence of a person for whom she has interested herself having made interest else-

where ; all this, and much more is exposed in these cursed papers.'

'Every day, and every hour,' writes Mr. Fremantle, 'adds to the evidence against the Duke of York, and it is quite impossible but that he must sink under it.'

Mrs. Clarke, elegant, gracious, and unruffled, went to the House to give her evidence, attired 'in a light blue silk gown and coat, edged with white fur, and a fur muff;' and in her answers betrayed wit, cleverness, and playful repartee, qualities which went a far way towards fascinating at least the younger members. During a severe cross-examination, which lasted three hours, she completely foiled Gibbs, a lawyer who defended His Royal Highness. Indeed, she occasionally undertook to divert the House, with a cool impertinence which challenged admiration. Once, when asked who delivered her letters to the duke, she replied the Morocco ambassador, which she subsequently condescended to explain was Mr. Taylor, a Bond Street shoe-maker, who owed his wealth to princely patronage. On another occasion, when a member of the House asked her bluntly,

‘Pray, madam, under whose protection are you now?’ she turned calmly to the chairman, and said, ‘At present, sir, I believe I am under yours.’

The letters just referred to were of course made public property, and were found to be such remarkable specimens of eloquence as had not interested and charmed the world since the appearance of those of the Duke of Cumberland to Lady Grosvenor. In one of these, His enamoured Highness addresses his mistress as ‘Lovely charmer of my soul.’ After easing his foolish heart by giving vent to such expressions as, ‘Oh, my angel, how you are beloved; how I long to return to my love,’ he rapidly proceeds to business.

‘General Clavering, my love, is mistaken,’ he writes. ‘There are no new regiments to be raised; they are only second battalions that are to be formed; so that his business cannot be done, and tell him so.’

Another of his epistles is written in a far finer style, and betrays more lofty sentiments. It is worth reading.

‘MY DEAR LITTLE ANGEL,

‘How can I sufficiently express to my sweetest darling love the delight which your dear, dear, pretty letter gave me, or how do justice to the emotions it excited! Millions, millions of thanks for it, my angel, and be assured that my heart is wholly fixed on your affection. I am quite hurt, my love, that you did not go to the Lewes races. It was kind of you to think of me on the occasion. News, my angel, you cannot expect from me from hence, for the life I lead here is in the family, and I am hurrying them to leave this that I may the sooner return to clasp my angel in my arms. Dr. O’Meara gave me your letter. He wishes to preach before royalty, and I shall endeavour to procure him the occasion. What a long time it is, my darling, since we parted. I shall long for Wednesday se’nnight, that I may return to my love’s arms. Adieu.

‘Yours, and yours alone,

‘FREDERICK.’

The town dwelt on this scandal with delight; pamphlets and ballads ridiculing the royal duke

issued in numbers from the press; caricatures filled the shop windows, and the joke among the people was, when they tossed up half-pence, not to cry heads and tails, but duke and darling.

‘It was established beyond the possibility of doubt,’ says Sir Samuel Romilly, in the ‘Diary of his Parliamentary Life,’ ‘that the duke had permitted Mrs. Clarke, his mistress, to interfere in military promotions; that he had given commissions at her recommendation, and that she had taken money for the recommendations. That the duke knew that she took money, or that he knew that the establishment which he had set on foot for her was partly supported with the money thus illegally procured by her, did not appear otherwise than from her evidence. She, however, asserted the fact directly and positively; and her evidence was supported in many other particulars which seemed the most incredible, by such strong corroborations, that her immoral character, her resentment, and her contradictions were not sufficient to render her evidence altogether incredible.’

Towards the close of the trial, the duke

wrote a letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons, in which he declared he 'must ever regret and lament that a connection should have existed which has thus exposed my character to animadversion;' he furthermore, on his 'honour as a prince,' asserted his innocence. At the mention of this honour, the Prince of Wales openly sneered, but the duke said its consciousness led him 'confidentially to hope that the House of Commons will not, upon such evidence as they have heard, adopt any proceedings prejudicial to my honour and character;' he also resigned his appointment as Commander-in-Chief, when the following motion was carried, 'That the Duke of York, having resigned the command of the army, the House does not think it necessary to proceed any further in the consideration of the minutes of the evidence, so far as they relate to His Royal Highness.'

Three years subsequently, when the Prince of Wales was regent, the Duke of York was reinstated in the office of Commander-in-Chief, on which occasion Lord Milton moved a resolution in the House to the effect that 'it has

been highly improper and indecorous in the advisers of the Prince Regent to have recommended to His Royal Highness the re-appointment of the Duke of York to the office of Commander-in-Chief; the motion was, however, defeated by a majority who wished to keep well with the regent.

Meanwhile the duchess lived in retirement at Oatlands Park, Weybridge, a residence that had the reputation of being 'the worst managed establishment in England.' Her Royal Highness had become singularly eccentric, and one of her crazes was to surround herself with parrots, monkeys, and dogs in vast numbers; she also kept a menagerie on a small scale, where kangaroos, ostriches, and other birds and animals, received royal attentions. The duchess seldom went to bed, but took a few hours' sleep, sitting dressed on a couch or chair, now in one apartment, now in another, and delighted in taking solitary walks at dead of night, or in the small hours of the morning. At three o'clock she breakfasted and dressed, when, surrounded by all her dogs, which never numbered less than forty, she went into the park or village.

When any of these animals died, they were decently interred in a spot set aside for the purpose, close by the fish-pond, their resting-places being marked by small marble headstones bearing their names, and occasionally touching inscriptions in verse recording their eminent virtues.

The duke, with some friends, usually visited her every Saturday, when they stayed till the following Monday morning; the guests were allowed to amuse themselves as they pleased, without the least ceremony being observed; they went to church, if so inclined, or, if not, played with the dogs and monkeys, ate fruit in the garden, or shot at marks with pistols.

‘There are a great many servants, but nobody waits on you; a vast number of horses, but none to ride or drive,’ writes Charles Greville, speaking of Oatlands. One of the duchess’s foibles was her extreme tenaciousness of authority; one way of which she showed it was by appropriating all the horses to herself; though she seldom rode or drove them, she wished it to be seen she had the privilege of preventing others from doing so.

Once, when one of the aides-de-camp wanted to drive to Hampton Court, the duke desired he would take a curricule and two Spanish horses which had been given him ; but, no sooner did the curricule come to the door, than the duchess ordered it back. In other ways she was most agreeable, and without prejudices, as may be judged from the fact that, when some strolling players came to fret their brief hours upon a very primitive kind of stage in a barn close by her residence, she went to see them, accompanied by a select circle of her dogs, and all her servants ; on the very next day a Methodist preacher held forth in the same spot which the player vagabonds had desecrated when the royal duchess ordered her servants to hear and receive words of salvation from the holy man ; strange and sad to say, they begged to be excused, on the plea that they did not understand English ; but the duchess was too clever for them. ‘ You went to the comedy,’ quoth she, ‘ which you understood less, and now you must go to the preacher ;’ and to the preacher they went.

The duke, during his weekly visits, was

readily amused, 'particularly with jokes full of coarseness and indelicacy;' he played whist on Saturday and Sunday nights, as long as he could get anyone to play with him for five-pound points and twenty-five pounds on the rubber, and drank and slept a great deal. The duchess, when she played, gambled at half-crown whist, as she believed such limited sums best suited the condition of her finances, which were not always in a flourishing state. Once she showed some of her guests a picture of herself, which she was about to send the Duchess of Orleans; they all cried out it was vilely done, and suggested she should get Lawrence to paint her portrait; but the royal duchess declared she could not afford it, when they asked permission to defray the expense; this she right willingly agreed to, and even suggested the names of some of her absent friends whom she believed would participate in the costs.

Another of the royal princes, Augustus, Duke of Sussex, came prominently before the public in 1793. He had, with his brothers Ernest and Adolphus, been sent to the University of Göt-

tingen, in order that he might be free from the evil example of the elder members of his family; and from thence, being delicate, he had gone to travel in Italy. In Rome he met Lady Augusta Murray, daughter of the Earl of Dunmore, with whom he soon became deeply enamoured. He was, at the time, one and twenty, whilst the young lady whom he was pleased to style 'his soul,' and 'his treasure, without whom he would pass the days in one constant melancholy, wishing them soon to conclude, and finding everyone longer than the other,' was fourteen years his senior.

The royal marriage act, which pronounced the union of a prince and a subject null and void without the consent of Parliament, was an obstacle that threatened their happiness; but this the love-stricken prince determined to set aside, and drew up a paper in which he declared that,

'On my knees before God our Creator, I, Augustus Frederick, promise thee, Augusta Murray, and swear upon the Bible, as I hope for salvation in the world to come, that I will take thee, Augusta Murray, for my wife

and may God forget me, if ever I forget thee. The Lord's name be praised! So bless me, so bless me, O God!

After some difficulties, they were married in Rome by a clergyman of the Church of England, on April 4, and subsequently on their return to England the ceremony was repeated in St. George's Church, Hanover Square, on December 5, in the presence of a coal-merchant, named Jones, and his wife. The banns had been duly published (the names of the bride and bridegroom being given as Augustus Frederick and Augusta Murray), but neither the rector nor anyone else had the least suspicion of their rank or position. Shortly after the last ceremony, the lady gave birth to a boy—afterwards Sir Augustus Frederick d'Este—and rumours of the union became gradually noised about town; when the prince, fearing his royal father's wrath, thought it prudent to quit England. When the news reached the king's ears, His virtuous Majesty gave orders that proceedings should at once be taken to prove the marriage null and void, according to the infamous and despotic act he had framed. It remains to

be added that, though Augustus Frederick had prayed so fervently that God might forget him if he forgot Augusta Murray, yet in a few years he took advantage of the vile sentence which had pronounced this union void, to utterly and heartlessly desert her; and Lady Augusta was obliged to petition the Court of Chancery that, out of the £12,000 per annum which the grateful nation allowed her husband, she might receive a sum sufficient to maintain herself and his two children. After her death, the duke married again, his selection being once more the daughter of an earl, Lady Cecilia Underwood.

Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland (fifth son of George III.), was the most unpopular member of the royal family. In appearance, he was a tall, powerful man, with what Stockmar describes as 'a hideous face,' rendered all the more repulsive from the fact that 'one of the eyes turned quite out of its place.' His disposition was repellent, and his severities over the regiments he commanded showed him to have been cruel and sanguinary. When twelve years old, he was created Duke of Cumberland

and Teviotdale, and Earl of Armagh, and obtained a Parliamentary grant of £12,000, which in a few years was increased to £18,000, and finally to £21,000. Colonel Willis describes his conversation as 'of a nature as to coarseness that would have disgraced one of his grooms.'

'There never,' said his brother, George IV., to the Duke of Wellington, speaking of His Royal Highness, 'was a father well with his son, or husband with his wife, or lover with his mistress, or friend with his friend, that he did not try to make mischief between them.'

In 1810, an event happened to the duke which startled the public, and caused the most infamous scandals to be freely circulated.

On the morning of May 31, it was announced that an attempt had been made on the duke's life, whilst he was in bed in his apartments in St. James's Palace, by his valet, a Corsican named Sellis. His bed-room was large, and was faintly lighted by a lamp, which it was his habit to keep burning all night. About half-past two, the duke asserted, he was awakened by a blow; this could not have been severe, as he states his first impression was that a bat had

got into the room, and was beating about his head.

Left by the dim light of the lamp, he soon discerned the flash of a steel weapon; he then raised his hand towards the bell-rope, in order to give alarm, but could not find it, on which he jumped from bed and rushed towards the door of an apartment communicating with his own, where a page named Neale slept, pursued by his assailant, who cut him on the thigh, and inflicted some other injuries on him. The man who had, in this strange and singularly clumsy manner, attempted the life of the royal duke, then made his escape without hindrance; whilst His Royal Highness cried out to his page, 'I am murdered—I am murdered.'

When Neale, more heroic than his royal master, rushed towards the bed-room, the duke, with a trait of humanity new to his character, held him back; the murderers, he said—for it now seemed to him his assailants had increased in numbers—were in that room, and would surely kill him; but Neale accidentally treading on a weapon, which, singularly enough, proved to be a favourite sabre of the duke's, which he always

kept in his bed-room, the royal nerves were somewhat quieted.

The household was now aroused, but Sellis, for whom the duke particularly asked, was wanting. Meanwhile a surgeon was sent for, who immediately pronounced that His Royal Highness's wounds were by no means fatal, and his subsequent recovery fortunately proved extremely rapid. Sellis not appearing, Neale the page went in search of him, but found his bed-room door locked; it was then remembered that there was another entrance to his apartment, by a door that opened on the principal staircase; no sooner was access gained by this than Sellis was discovered sitting in a semi-erect position in bed, with his throat almost severed from the body, life being, of course, quite extinct. A razor lay beside him; marks of blood were discovered on his coat, which was carefully folded and laid at some little distance from his bed, and a basin containing water tinged with blood was also noticed. It was now, of course, quite clear to the meanest comprehension that he had striven in the strangest fashion to murder the duke with a remarkably awkward weapon, and

that His Royal Highness providentially saved his life only by flying from this would be assassin, who it may be remarked, was much inferior to the duke in strength and stature; and that fearing detection, the unhappy Sellis had, before even the slightest suspicion could rest on him, put an end to his wretched existence. It only remained for a jury to be summoned, who, after four hours' mature deliberation, returned a verdict that Sellis had committed suicide; when his body was buried without ceremony in the high road.

This tragedy caused the wildest sensation in town; it became the fashion to go and see the duke's apartments in the absence of His Royal Highness,—whose injuries were not so severe as to prevent his removal to Carlton House—the rooms having been left in the same condition as found on the morning of the occurrence for several days, for the benefit of public curiosity.

In a little while, when the public had recovered from the surprise caused by the horrible occurrence, it began to speculate as to the reason which had actuated Sellis to perpetrate this desperate deed; it was then whispered by

the duke's friends that Sellis had been jealous of his royal master, who had paid some attentions to his valet's wife, and it was timely remembered that the duke had stood god-father to Sellis's child ; it was also said that the valet had been slightly mad, and there were those who now remembered several signs of the dread malady in his manner, though they had been culpably negligent in not remarking this to His Royal Highness, thereby exposing his valuable life, as it afterwards proved, to the most imminent risk. Others again had no doubt Sellis, who was a Catholic, merely revenged himself on his royal master because of the constant gross and violent abuse of that religion which the royal duke, with his accustomed signs of good breeding, was in the habit of addressing to his servant.

Of course such an opportunity as this afforded was seized on to circulate the grossest scandals, which, strange to say, gained wide credence. It was openly and plainly stated that the duke had murdered Sellis, and inflicted some slight wounds upon his own person, in order to give colour to his story of having

been attacked in his bed; moreover, it was vilely asserted that the coroner's jury who had held the inquest on the body, had been packed and improperly influenced; and that the motive of getting rid of Sellis was, that the duke feared lest he should reveal a secret of which he had become accidentally possessed, which inculpated his royal master in a penal crime. Singular to say, two circumstances favoured these most atrocious reports. It was well known that Sellis was a left-handed man, but one of the physicians who saw the body, declared, if he had inflicted the wound, it must have been with his right hand; another of the medical faculty went further still, and actually had the audacity to state that, having carefully examined Sellis's wounds, he was certain that the cuts on the back of the neck could not possibly have been inflicted by the deceased; moreover, he had the monstrous hardihood to make the subject the basis of a lecture to his pupils, in the course of which he said, that, if Sellis died by his own hand, he did not cut and wound the back of his neck.

‘Sellis,’ he declared, ‘had not one, but several

wounds on the back of his neck. If Sellis had meant his own decollation, he must have begun behind his neck—but, labour with the razor as he might, it would only hack and hew his flesh; for no physical strength would be sufficient to terminate the existence of an individual by beheading himself.'

The duke was sufficiently forbearing to overlook these statements, and many of the gross assertions concerning his character in general, and this tragedy in particular, which continually appeared in the press, until the publication so late as 1832, of a book, entitled, 'The Authentic Records of the Court of England for the last Seventy Years, written by Lady Anne Hamilton.' In this work, the tragedy concerning Sellis was gone into with great minuteness, and in summing up the various circumstances of the case it concluded with the words,

'Had it been the case of a poor man, he must have hung, and his body given for dissection, merely upon circumstantial evidence; but the son of a reigning monarch had, by circumstantial evidence alone, been acquitted.'

The publisher of this wicked libel was one

Josiah Phillips, who dwelt in the Strand. He was prosecuted and punished. Many years after Sellis's death, the duke's name was unfortunately mixed up with another suicide in a most unpleasant manner. The duke, it was well known, though at this time a married man, had an intrigue with Lady Graves, whose husband was so sensitive to the injury inflicted on his honour, that he ended his life by his own hand. The duke, who had become used to such tragedies, was too philosophical to let this affair prey upon his royal mind, and, immediately after the funeral of the unhappy man, was seen day after day driving about in public with the widowed Lady Graves.

In 1814, he contracted a marriage with his cousin, Frederica Caroline Sophia, daughter of the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Queen Charlotte's brother. This lady possessed a temperament usually designated as gay; she had thrice entered the holy bonds of matrimony, and been once divorced. The queen, unaware of this latter little circumstance in the life of her future daughter-in-law, wrote to the Duke of Mecklenburg to say she would endeavour

to render the residence of her niece as pleasant as circumstances would permit, 'Considering,' says Her Majesty, 'that my sedentary life prevents me contributing much to the amusement of the princesses, and that the greater part of my time is passed in the country, where our society is very limited, and our life uniform.'

She then requested her brother to inform his daughter of certain usages of English society.

'It is not the fashion here,' said royalty, 'to receive morning visits from gentlemen, to which she will be exposed, by reason of the duke being colonel of a regiment, unless he himself introduces them to her: she should also be very circumspect in the choice of ladies with whom she shall associate, which will be so much the more necessary, as the duke has acquaintances amongst our sex who, though not actually of bad conduct, might, however, become injurious to her in point of policy.'

Her Gracious Majesty finally informed the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz that she sent him by the courier who conveyed her letter, 'six pounds of tea and two cheeses. Eat the latter,' she added, 'to my health, and,

in drinking the tea, remember a sister whose attachment to you will not cease but with death.'

His Serene Highness the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz gratefully accepted the cheeses and the six pounds of tea from his royal sister—presents worthy of so great a queen.

When the royal duke brought his bride to England, her aunt, who had meanwhile heard various little items of her history, more entertaining than edifying, refused to receive her at Court, or hold any communication with her; the universal detestation which was felt to the duke was at the same time expressed by the refusal of Parliament to grant him an addition of £6,000 per annum, as had been the custom to bestow on the royal dukes when they married.

The Dukes of Kent and Cambridge were by far the most estimable of the king's sons; their public careers were not brilliant, but their private lives were respectable, and they have fortunately left behind them no disreputable histories.

CHAPTER III.

The Prince of Wales and his Difficulties—His Proposed Marriage—Lord Malmesbury at the Court of Brunswick—The Bride-elect—Her Journey to England and Reception by the Prince—Marriage and Honeymoon—The Evil Genius of her Life—The Story of the Lost Letters—The Prince's Debts—Disloyalty of the People—The Cry of 'No King!'—The King's Life Attempted—Birth of a Young Princess—The Prince's Separation from His Wife—The Lord Chancellor's Opinion of His Sanity—Mrs. Fitzherbert Communicates with Rome.

MEANWHILE the Prince of Wales sank lower and lower in the morass of debt and dissipation which now threatened to swamp him; the outlay on the whimsical, unnecessary alterations of Carlton House reached the enormous figure of £56,950; his stud cost him, he admitted, £30,000 a year; and the sums he squandered on any woman who chanced to please his amorous fancy were prodigious. He had signed bills and bonds in numbers, heedless

of the consequences of the future, if he could relieve the necessities of the present ; and had, in conjunction with the Dukes of York and Clarence, whose respective incomes of £18,000 and £12,000 a year were insufficient for their expensive tastes, raised large sums on their bonds through the respectable agency of the prince's German cook, Weltjie.

Nor was this all ; the heir to the throne offered £10,000 and an Irish peerage (which must have weighed but little in his estimation), after the king's death, for every £5,000 which was given him in the present. But, finding that even on these terms there were few who were ready to swallow the bait and trust him, he resolved on a yet more desperate proceeding ; this was to raise £350,000 on the Duchy of Cornwall and the bishopric of Osnaburgh, with payments by drawings and a sinking-fund, the whole to be paid off in twenty-five years ; this transaction coming to the king's knowledge, much trouble followed which covered the royal brothers with dishonour.

The prince was now, as the Duke of Portland lamented to Lord Malmesbury, but little re-

spected, so little, indeed, that his creditors frequently stopped him in the streets to demand their just debts from him, after seeking every other mode for payment in vain ; the workmen at Carlton House petitioned the prime minister for their wages ; and several executions had been laid in the royal residence. Notwithstanding that his annual income amounted to £73,000 per annum, his debts now reached the round sum of £600,000, an amount he had squandered in reckless prodigality, and he resolved to bring his difficulties once more before the eyes of an indulgent nation, which he had no doubt would again assert its benevolence in removing from his royal shoulders the inconveniences which he suffered. In an interview which he had at this time with Lord Malmesbury, he again used the threat of going abroad, and living in a retired manner. He did not, he said, stand so well with the king, but was better than ever with the queen, whose favourite he had always been ; her wily Majesty had advised him, he said, to press the king, through the Chancellor, to propose that Pitt should bring the consideration of an increase of his income before Parliament, and

she had promised to give this scheme her earnest support. On this occasion the prince talked coldly of the Duke and Duchess of York, because the latter had refused to treat Mrs. Fitzherbert *en belle sœur*, and of the Duke of Clarence slightly, and was indeed inclined to be in ill-humour with the world at large.

On an appeal being made to the king for an increase of income for the prince, and for the payment of his debts, His Majesty gave it to be understood that the sole terms on which such advantages could be obtained were the marriage of the heir to the crown, who was then in his thirty-third year; a step which, it was hoped, might have some restraining effect on his career of unbridled excesses, and secure the prosperity of the nation. To this proposal the prince did not lend such an unwilling ear as might have been expected. He had long since proved faithless to Mrs. Fitzherbert, now openly styled in a pamphlet by Horne Tooke, 'Both legally, really, worthily, and, happily for the country, Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales;' and almost as freely spoken of by the members of the royal family, accord-

ing to the Harcourt diary, as his legal wife.

Not to mention others, his connection became notorious with Lady Jersey, a bold and beautiful woman, whose husband was appointed Master of the Horse to the prince, in reward for her ladyship's infamy. Already an open adulterer, His Royal Highness did not hesitate to commit bigamy when, by that crime—urged on him by the virtuous king, who was certainly cognisant of his marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert—he had the prospect of ridding himself from the humiliation of debt, and of receiving from the nation a larger income, which would afford him greater facilities for the indulgence of his base passions.

‘Others, with whom he lived upon the most intimate terms,’ says Lord Brougham, ‘are supposed to have interposed fresh obstacles to this scheme; but these were overcome by an understanding that the new wife should enjoy only the name—that systematic neglect and insult of every kind heaped upon her should attest how little concern the heart had with this honourable arrangement, and how entirely the husband should continue devoted to the wedded

wives of other men. Everything was settled to the satisfaction of all parties; the old spouse was discarded—the old mistresses were cherished, fondled, and appeased.’

Accordingly, he resolved to enter into the holy bonds of matrimony, but was perfectly indifferent as to who his future bride should be; the king, however, undertook to spare him this trouble, and selected as the future Princess of Wales, Caroline of Brunswick, the daughter of His Majesty’s eldest sister; His Royal Highness agreeing to this choice with a complacency that savoured but too strongly of indifference. His Gracious Majesty wrote to the prime minister that he had an interview with the Prince of Wales, who had ‘acquainted me with his having broken off all connection with Mrs. Fitzherbert, and his desire of entering into a more creditable line of life by marrying.’ As to his niece, the king declared, ‘undoubtedly she is the person who naturally must be most agreeable to me . . . provided his plan was to lead a life that would make him appear respectable, and, consequently, render the princess happy.’ His Majesty, with an eye to the financial result

of this union, sagely added, that he informed the prince 'that, till Parliament assembled, no arrangement could be taken.'

In good time, Lord Malmesbury, a clever diplomatist and able courtier, was despatched to the little Court of Brunswick, to negotiate a marriage with the Princess Caroline, a lady whom neither the king nor the prince had ever seen, and who was now in her twenty-seventh year. My lord received his instructions personally from the king, who was most eager for the marriage, and who gave him no discretionary powers, to give either advice or information to His Majesty or the prince regarding the object of his mission; though he subsequently took heed of many things of which he did not approve, in the manners and ways of the lady, whom he terms his 'eccentric charge,' he, believing his opinions were not required at St. James's, wisely, or unwisely, held his diplomatic tongue.

He was received at Brunswick with all the honours befitting the importance of his mission. When his arrival was made known, no less a personage than the high and mighty Grand

Marschal Munchausen called upon him, to offer him the use of a palace during his stay, with servants, a carriage, a valet-de-chambre, a concierge, three footmen, and two sentinels; moreover, he was honoured by an invitation to dine, from the Duchess of Brunswick, mother to the bride-elect.

Here he met the Princess Caroline, who was much embarrassed at seeing him, and his first impressions of that ill-fated woman were not very favourable; her face, he said, was pretty, but not expressive of softness; she had fine eyes, he admitted, 'tolerable teeth, but going, fair hair and light eyebrows, good bust, short, with what the French call *des pectations*.' Mrs. Harcourt, when she arrived at the Brunswick Court to accompany the princess to England, remarked that in her appearance there was 'some resemblance in miniature to what Mrs. Fitzherbert was when young;' whilst the courtiers of St. James's subsequently spoke of the resemblance she bore His Gracious Majesty, 'especially in the upper lip, which protrudes.'

Lord Marlborough tarried a month at the Court, when Major Hislop arrived from England

in hot haste, bearing the prince's portrait, and, strange to say, a letter from that illustrious person, vehemently urging the diplomatist to set out with the Princess Caroline immediately. A ceremony of marriage, at which Lord Malmesbury stood proxy for the prince, was then gone through with due solemnity, after which stately compliments and gracious felicitations were expressed; then came a heavy dinner, followed by whist, at which the new made Princess of Wales, as she was now entitled to be called, took a hand, and played an excellent game; the celebrations of the day closing with a sumptuous supper, at which the whole Court assisted.

The morality practised in the bride's home was distinguished by all the looseness which marked the petty German courts of the period. The Duchess of Brunswick mentioned to Lord Malmesbury, not at all by way of complaint, but incidentally, in the course of one of their conversations, that her husband, at the time he came to England to marry her, was in love with three ladies of rank, and enjoyed the friendship of an Italian girl likewise. Mademoiselle de Hertzfeldt was now his acknowledged mistress;

this lady dressed with all the elegant *apparel* of her situation, and had her acknowledged place in all Court ceremonies. The duke, a man of the easiest morals, had written out in German a code of conduct for his daughter to pursue in England, amongst which he specially advised her never to show any jealousy of her husband, and ‘that, if he had any *goũts*, not to notice them.’ For all that, he dreaded, he said, the prince’s habits, the fame of which had spread through Europe, and was gravely apprehensive of the future. His daughter could not help feeling likewise concerned, and her fears were strengthened by some anonymous letters which both she and her parents received, warning them of His Royal Highness’s character, and the fate she might expect. Another letter which reached the Court also filled her with some alarm; this was written not by an anonymous, but by the royal hand of George III., who expressed his hopes to the duchess that his niece ‘would not indulge in too much vivacity, but would lead a sedentary and retired life.’

Now, when the irrevocable steps had been taken, the new princess strove to make the best

of her position, and to appear gay and cheerful ; but at times her eyes filled with tears, and now and again she ventured to express her thoughts. She declared she was fearful of her future mother-in-law, who she was sure would be jealous of her, and do her harm ; she also asked about Lady Jersey, whom she considered an *intriguante*, said she knew the prince was *léger*, but she was already prepared on that point, and determined never to appear jealous ; that her sole wish was to become popular, and to gain the love of the people.

At this avowal, my Lord Malmesbury pricked up his courtly ears and told her, in severe tones, that ‘popularity was never gained by familiarity ; that it could only belong to respect, and was to be acquired by a just mixture of dignity and affability.’ The diplomatist then referred to his gracious queen as a model, and informed her gravely ‘that the sentiment of being loved by the people is a mistaken one—that sentiment can only be given to a few, that a nation at large can only respect and honour a great princess, and that its love can be procured, not by pleasant openness and free communication, but

by strict attention to appearances—by never going below the high rank in which a princess is placed.’ Over these autocratic words the poor bride pondered long in silence, but she was positively startled when, *à propos* of intrigues, my lord thought well to inform her that ‘it was death to presume to approach a Princess of Wales.’ She asked him if he were in earnest; he answered it was the English law ‘that anybody who presumed to approach her was guilty of high treason, and punished with death, if she was weak enough to listen to him; so also would *she*.’

Mrs. Harcourt now arrived at Brunswick, and took a more hopeful view of the bride’s future; she, poor lady, said, in courtly words, she was sure the prince would adore his bride; and she added that the princess ‘was prepared and disposed to adore him, and do her duty by him.’ It may be argued, in favour of her sincerity, that she had not been in England for a considerable time. Meanwhile, the bride set out for London; nothing could be more propitious than the weather; the wind was fair, the sea smooth as glass; there never had been, it was

said, so happy a voyage. The princess was full of good humour, affable in manners, sweet in temper, and delighted at her future prospects.

‘It does one’s heart good to see anybody so happy,’ writes Mrs. Harcourt. ‘All the officers of the ship declare they should have had more trouble with any London lady than Her Royal Highness has given.’

On Sunday, April 5, 1795, the princess landed at Greenwich Hospital, when she was received by the governor, Sir Hugh Palisser, and his officers all; and here it was that she first met Lady Jersey, the woman destined to have so evil an influence on her fate. The prince’s mistress had been appointed by him as first lady of the bed-chamber to the princess; a gross and wanton insult, which he did not hesitate to inflict on his bride, and regarding which the queen did not interfere. In this capacity, it was her ladyship’s duty to have awaited the princess’s landing; she did not, however, put herself to any inconvenience in the matter, and only arrived at Greenwich an hour after the princess had arrived. At their first meeting, she ventured to make some uncomplimentary

remarks regarding the bride's dress, and behaved in such a manner that Lord Malmesbury was obliged to speak 'rather sharply to her.' She then produced a suit she had brought from London at the queen's request, in which the princess was to travel to town: this consisted of 'a mantle of green-sattin, trimmed with gold, with loops and tassels a la Brandenburg,' which remarkable costume was completed by a beaver hat.

When Her Royal Highness's toilette was finished, she got into one of the king's coaches, drawn by six horses, which awaited her. Here again Lady Jersey's behaviour called for the interference of Lord Malmesbury. The mistress refused to sit backwards in the coach, but desired to sit side by side with the bride-elect; my lord, however, declined to allow such a breach of etiquette; my lady declared she would have a headache; when he informed her she should never have accepted her situation as lady of the bed-chamber, who never ought to sit forward; and, if she was likely to be sick, she could share the carriage allotted to him and Lord Claremount; an offer she promptly refused.

When the princess was driven to St. James's, she was ushered into the apartments overlooking Cleveland Row, where, if this stranger in a strange land expected her bridegroom would be courteous enough to receive her, she was destined to bitter disappointment; but the people strove to make up by their enthusiasm for this lack of respect on the part of the prince. They had lined the streets by which she had driven, and cheered her heartily, and now assembled in vast numbers outside St. James's, where they huzzaed until, according to that most courtly chronicle the *St. James's Gazette*, 'in a voice replete with melody and delicacy of tone, she thus addressed them from her palace window, "Believe me, I feel very happy and delighted to see the good and brave English people, the best nation upon earth;"' which parrot-like phrases, evidently delivered with the assistance of a prompter, were received with exceeding great joy by the mob, who were afterwards to be her best friends.

After a while, the tardy bridegroom came from Carlton House, close by, to greet his bride; but appeared much embarrassed, ill at ease,

and perhaps conscience-stricken at the wrong which his bigamy was about to inflict upon this helpless woman. He was introduced to her by Lord Malmesbury, no other person being in the apartment, when the princess, according to the required etiquette, attempted to kneel; but the prince raised her up, saluted her, and, uttering but one word, turned round abruptly, walked to a distant corner of the apartment, and, calling Lord Malmesbury to him, demanded a glass of brandy. The diplomatist had probably certain reasons for replying, 'Sir, had you not better have a glass of water?' upon which he replied, with a round oath, 'No; I will go directly to the queen,' and, without another word, he left the room.

Amazed at such conduct from one whom she had heard called the first gentleman in Europe, the bride, trembling and frightened, cried out, 'My God! is the prince always like that?' to which question the excellent courtier answered, His Royal Highness 'was naturally a good deal affected and flurried at this first interview.'

At five o'clock the prince and princess dined, she appearing in the wonderful head-dress in

which she was painted in the picture sent to her bridegroom; whilst he was dressed in the hussar uniform of his regiment, as in the portrait painted by Conway and sent to his bride. At this dinner, all who had attended the princess from Greenwich assisted—Lady Jersey of course included,—whilst Lord Stopford, as Vice-Chamberlain, did the honours. At the conclusion, the prince and princess paid a visit to their Majesties at Buckingham House, when the queen betrayed to this member of a rival house which she hated, the uttermost repulsiveness, asked her a few questions, and then remained silent during the interview; the king, on the contrary, was kind and good-natured. According to the loyal, but highly inflated language of the *Oracle*, he, ‘on first seeing his lovely relation, discovered the most amiable sensibility. Tears of joy bedewed his cheeks on receiving the hand of his favourite sister’s daughter.’ The prince had by this time somewhat recovered himself, paid her some attentions, and strove to express his hopes for their mutual happiness. At eleven o’clock the princess retired, when she was attended by her lady of the bed-chamber, the crafty, jealous, and vicious Countess of Jersey.

‘Lady Jersey,’ says Huish in his ‘Memoirs of George IV.,’ ‘who had appeared displeased by the attentions which the Prince of Wales had paid to his destined wife, now also retired, determined to avail herself of the period which would elapse prior to a second interview between the illustrious personages to represent to the prince, in false and unmerited language, the character of her royal mistress. To Lady Jersey, the Princess of Brunswick had certainly most incautiously and unwarily stated her attachment to a German prince, and Lady Jersey stated that the princess said, “She was persuaded that she loved one little finger of that individual far better than she should love the whole person of the Prince of Wales.” The accuracy of this statement to its full extent was subsequently denied by the Princess of Brunswick, but still she admitted that she had imprudently referred to a former attachment. Lady Jersey, on the succeeding day, apprised the Prince of Wales of that attachment, assured him that his intended consort had made the above declaration, found fault with her person, ridiculed the coarseness of her manners, pre-

dicted that the marriage, if consummated, would be unfortunate, and inveighed against the king for promoting the intended union. A great part of this statement was subsequently admitted by Lady Jersey, and what was not so admitted was stated by the princess on the highest authority to have taken place.'

It was arranged that the marriage should be celebrated on the following Wednesday evening, when many preparations were made. Thrones for the king and queen were erected in St. James's Chapel, the walls of which were newly covered with 'fresh paper, so as to imitate crimson velvet;' stalls were placed in the royal apartments, through which the bridal procession would pass, for the courtiers to witness the sight; the town was made ready for illuminations; long-winded addresses were prepared, and the muses put their nine heads together to compose some of the most wonderfully nonsensical rhapsody ever conceived for the occasion. Amongst many others, these goddesses of song inspired the gentle lay of Miss Churchill, of Queen Street, Chelsea, an enthusiastic young lady much given to the use of notes of admiration, whose verses

gained her some notoriety. 'She comes,' Miss Churchill somewhat unnecessarily announces, in reference to the princess—

'She comes! the lovely Caroline appears!
Loud acclamations filled the vaulted air!
While tott'ring age the information cheers,
And old and young congratulate the fair!'

On Wednesday evening, the first act in the painful tragedy in the life of Charlotte, Princess of Wales, was enacted, when the royal marriage was solemnized in St. James's Chapel. At half-past eight o'clock, the queen's ladies, her lord-chamberlain, and her master of the horse were summoned into Her Majesty's bed-chamber, where the royal family were assembled. Then came the bridal procession, headed by trumpets and drums, heralds and ushers, and a goodly array of courtiers, preceding the bride, who was led by the Duke of Clarence, passed through the queen's bed-chamber on their way to the Chapel Royal. The princess was pale and nervous, and was clad in a nuptial habit of silver-tissue, ornamented with many jewels, and a robe of crimson velvet, lined and bordered with ermine, which hung loose from her

shoulders, and was borne by the daughters of two dukes and two earls. Then came the bridegroom, corpulent of person and red of face, wearing his Collar of the Order of the Garter, supported, in more senses than one, by the Dukes of Bedford and Roxburgh, the procession closing with Their Gracious Majesties, attended by the officers of the household in full state.

Lord Malmesbury admits that, on this occasion, the prince 'had recourse to wine or spirits;' but Lady Harcourt goes further.

'The Duke of Gloucester,' she says, 'assured me the prince was quite drunk; and that, after dinner, he went out, and drank twelve glasses of Maraschino.'

Her description of the ceremony is worth recording.

'The princess,' she says, 'looked dignified and composed; but the prince, agitated to the greatest degree; he was like a man in despair, half crazy. He held so fast by the queen's hand, she could not remove it. When the archbishop called on those to come forward who knew any impediment, his manner of doing

it shook the prince, and made me shudder.'

So intoxicated was the bridegroom, that, in the middle of the service, he rose up. The archbishop suddenly ceased, and a dead pause ensued; when, before all the assembly, the king stepped down from the *haut pas*, whispered in the prince's ear, and, taking him by the arm, forced him into a kneeling position, where he remained until the solemn nuptial benediction was pronounced. After the ceremony, a drawing-room was held, followed by a supper to the royal family at Buckingham House, on the conclusion of which the prince and princess retired to their home, Carlton House.

During the succeeding weeks, there were balls given by Their Majesties and the foreign ministers, and the princess made her *début* to the public by a state visit to Covent Garden Theatre, when, by command of Their Majesties, a new and not over decent comedy, entitled, 'Life's Vagaries,' was acted, to which was added the new drama, 'Windsor Castle,' and the 'Masque of Peleus and Thetis;' a full programme. A state box for the use of Their Royal Highnesses was fitted up for the occasion,

opposite Their Majesties' box. This was gorgeously upholstered in crimson velvet, lined with white satin, surmounted with the royal plume, and otherwise adorned with gold foil in theatrical abundance.

The account given of the princess's visit in the *Oracle*, is worthy of being preserved.

‘With her happy consort,’ says this credulous journal, ‘she entered the house fully a quarter of an hour before Their Majesties with five of the princesses, arrived. They were received with applause, which made the whole theatre tremble; and the polite acknowledgment on the part of Her Royal Highness, redoubled the peals of loyal admiration. Upon the entry of Their Majesties, with the usual ceremonies, the Songs were called for, and sung by the whole Pit, which had a very singular effect; and, indeed, a more exhilarating sight never appealed to hearts susceptible to family delights and joying in the *loveliest* band of nature.

‘The princess was very brilliantly dressed, and her deportment was in the most finished style of dignified elegance. The ease of the prince is not now to be praised; but we never before

saw his countenance sparkle with so much content. The whole *suite* of Carlton House attended; and the *ensemble* bespoke truly a royal box.'

Even in the first few weeks of her married life, the princess was destined to meet with but little happiness. Earl Minto, in his interesting 'Life and Letters,' throws some light on the manner in which the honeymoon of this unhappy woman was spent. He dined at Blackheath with the princess, and was afterwards shown the correspondence which passed between her and the prince, Lord Malmesbury, Lady Elgin, and others.

'It appears,' he writes of their Royal Highnesses, 'that they lived together two or three weeks at first, but not at all afterwards as man and wife. They went to Windsor two days after the marriage, and, after a few days' residence there, they went to Kempshot, where there was no woman but Lady Jersey, and the men very blackguard companions of the prince's, who were constantly drunk and filthy, sleeping and snoring in boots on the sofa; and, in other respects, the scene was more like the Prince of

Wales at Eastcheap than like any notions she had acquired before of a gentleman.' Still appearances were maintained, and the bride and bridegroom were seen walking on the terrace at Windsor, the former 'in a dress of plain white muslin, a plain black bonnet with a single black feather, a very deep black veil, and a black cloak with broad lace.'

Lady Jersey, who was in the princess's society at all hours of the day, found a thousand ways of insulting the wife of her royal paramour, for whom she did not care to conceal her aversion, and from whom she did not seek to hide her infamy. Driven at last to resent this woman's conduct, the princess appealed to her husband to protect her from the insults she had no longer patience to endure, and hence arose their first quarrel. The first gentleman in Europe coldly informed his wife he required her to treat Lady Jersey 'as his friend;' this she passionately refused, and declared she would never sit at the same table with her unless he was present. He persisted that she should; bitter, vehement upbraidings followed, which ended by the injured wife demanding the dismissal of the mistress;

but this the prince refused, and quitted Carlton House overwhelmed with passion.

The princess used frequently to repeat years afterwards that the king told her, his brother, the Duke of Gloucester, informed him 'an arrangement was made with Lord Carlisle to give up Lady Jersey to the prince—that this was agreed to at Rochester, when Lady Jersey first set out to meet the Princess of Wales, and that there was an understanding that she should be always the object of his affections.' The princess now resolved to appeal, not to the pious queen, who received her eldest son's mistress in her drawing-room, and permitted her to play cards with the princesses, but to the king, her uncle, beseeching his interference, when His Majesty, after an interview with the prince, arranged that Lady Jersey should no more come into waiting; an engagement which was but in part fulfilled.

The princess had not been married many months, when an opportunity occurred which enabled the malignant countess to injure her in the estimation of the queen, who from the first had regarded her daughter-in-law with marked

coldness and dislike. The princess, rendered miserable by the life opening before her, sought relief by expressing her feelings to her parents, and some of her friends in Germany, in letters she wrote to them ; unfortunately she likewise passed rather free comments on her gracious, but snuff-taking Majesty by no means complimentary. These epistles were entrusted for delivery to the Rev. Dr. Randolph, then meditating a journey to Brunswick. It happened, however, that the reverend man was prevented from going abroad by the illness of his spouse, he therefore forwarded the package of letters to the princess, directing them under cover to Lady Jersey, and sending them by the Brighton post-coach from town, as he was told at Carlton House this was the usual mode of conveying the princess's papers and packets.

The letters never reached the princess, though she caused every inquiry to be made concerning them. No doubt was, however, left on her mind as to their fate, for not only did Her Gracious Majesty's manner become more chilling to her daughter-in-law, but she was pleased to let fall from her royal lips several expressions which

the unfortunate epistles contained, and which she likewise repeated to her friends. The princess then accused Lady Jersey of having forwarded her letters secretly to the queen, who, of course, made no scruple of opening them; and, the matter getting whispered about, the press took up the subject, and charged the countess with treachery, embezzlement, and deceit. In order to clear her immaculate character, she wrote Dr. Randolph a letter, which was printed in the *Pall Mall*, in which she entreated him to publish the account of the transaction in any of the newspapers he might think fit. To this the reverend doctor made no reply, when her much-abused ladyship wrote to him once more, saying she should consider his silence as countenancing that calumny which false representations had so shamefully drawn down upon her. To this he made answer that he had sent a friend to London to trace the missing package, when, if his efforts did not prove successful, he should return to town and pursue the discovery himself, but repeated he had forwarded the letters by the Brighton coach. Whereon my Lord Jersey, mindful of his wife's

honour, made pretence to the world at large of quarrelling with Dr. Randolph, a line of conduct which the princess, in common with many others, regarded as a manoeuvre to exonerate her ladyship and the reverend man from the charge in which she believed both were concerned.

In the meantime, the consideration of the prince's debts came before the House of Commons. The king, in his message, informed those in Parliament assembled that he relied on the liberality and affection of his faithful Commons, and on the cordial interest which they had manifested in the prince's marriage, to grant him an establishment. His Majesty also declared that, with 'the deepest regret,' he pointed out the necessity of freeing the prince from 'the incumbrances to a large amount to which he is now subject,' as it was delicately put. Moreover, His Gracious Majesty avowed he had no idea of proposing to his Parliament to make any prevision, otherwise than by an application of part of the income which might be settled on His Royal Highness, to the payment of his debts.

The message, which had been listened to in unbroken silence, was, at the conclusion, received with a universal murmur of indignation and surprise. Pitt then moved that the message be referred to a committee of the whole House, on which Colonel Stanley begged that the king's message delivered to the House eight years ago, on the occasion of the prince's debts coming before Parliament, should be read, when the following passage was listened to with keen attention :

‘His Majesty could not expect, or desire, the assistance of the House, but on the well-grounded expectation that the prince will avoid contracting any new debts in the future.’

Colonel Stanley then moved for a call of the House on the day when the prince's debts were to be considered. Pitt trusted the honourable gentleman would not press for a call ; but, the House being now excited, the prime-minister was obliged to give way. Mr. Grey, the man whom the prince had formerly asked to refute Fox's statement concerning Mrs. Fitzherbert, then stood up, and in a brief, but forcible, speech gave expression to the general feeling

of the House. It would make no difference to the public ultimately, he said, and it would be more eligible at once to pay the debts of His Royal Highness, and to create a tax specifically for that purpose. He wanted the matter to be plainly, fairly, and distinctly done, that the public might clearly see what burdens they were to bear for His Royal Highness. When the cries of the starving poor were assailing them on all sides, the House would not be doing its duty by granting establishments to princes with a profusion unparalleled. He had heard much of the dignity of His Royal Highness, but he was of opinion that the dignity of the Prince of Wales would be best maintained by his showing a feeling heart for the poor, and an unwillingness to add to their distresses.

Long and stormy debates followed the consideration of the prince's debts, when His Royal Highness was accused of breaking the promise he had previously made the House of incurring no further debts; and many bitter and personal allusions were made to His Royal Highness which his friends were pleased to

consider derogatory to his high station. During the discussion of the subject in the House of Lords, the Duke of Clarence, with an exquisite and characteristic delicacy, stated that the prince's 'marriage was part of a bargain, the price being the payment of his debts.'

The Prince of Wales finally submitted to the decision of Parliament; the result being that he was allowed an income of £125,000 a year, exclusive of his revenue of the Duchy of Cornwall, which amounted to £13,000 per annum; the princess's jointure was fixed at £50,000, and the important sums of £26,000 for the furnishing of Carlton House, and £20,000 for jewels were also granted him; however, out of this revenue a yearly deduction was made, in order that his debts might be gradually discharged.

At the period when the vast extravagance of the heir to the crown was day after day exciting the attention of the nation, a growing dissatisfaction, which required but little to raise it to the rank of a revolution, was gradually gaining strength in the minds of the people in consequence of the disastrous and ruinous

war with France. The taxes levied on the country were enormous; the public debts increased, provisions became scarce, and famine was anticipated. Throughout the country a turbulent spirit everywhere manifested itself; seditious ballads were circulated, demonstrations held, and petitions forwarded to the king, praying for peace with the French Republic.

The strong voice of popular indignation at last found vent in October, 1795, when the king proceeded in state to open Parliament. Dense and sullen crowds, to the number of 200,000, from whom ominous murmurs were heard, had collected, and lined the way from Buckingham House to Westminster, and, when the carriage of the Duke of Gloucester appeared, it was greeted by a storm of hisses. Presently there were fresh signs of subdued excitement in the mob, and then the great, lumbering state coach, containing the king and two of his officers of state, entered the park; this was the signal for a cry that suddenly and appealingly rose from the vast assemblage.

‘Bread—give us bread. Peace, peace,’ and then came an echo, ‘No king, no king,’ fol-

lowed by hisses and groans. When the royal carriage reached the Ordnance Office, a bullet pierced the glass window of the coach on one side, and passed out at the other. One of the lords became alarmed, but the king remained calm. 'Sit still, my lord; we must not betray fear, whatever happens,' he whispered. When he entered the House of Lords, the first person he met was the Lord Chancellor, to whom he said, 'My lord, I have been shot at.'

On His Majesty's return from Westminster, the attitude of the mob was still more offensive; when he entered St. James's Park, words of abuse and sedition assailed his ears; mud, filth, and stones were flung at the royal coach, some of which struck the king, who was now much agitated, and motioned to the Horse Guards at either side to keep off the people, whose shrill, threatening cry rose again and again, 'Bread! bread! peace! No king, no king!' Still pressed by the mob, the coach drove rapidly out of the park, and round by the stable-yard into St. James's Palace. When the king was about to alight, a fresh tumult took place, on which one of the horses became frightened, and a groom

was dashed to the ground, in the midst of which excitement the king escaped into the palace; the mob then attacked the state coach, and did it great injury, before the Guards were enabled to disperse them. Shortly afterwards the king entered a private carriage, and proceeded to Buckingham House; but he was again pursued by the populace, who threatened to pull him out of the carriage, and would probably have done so, but for his rapid driving and the timely arrival of the Life Guards.

Nor did this feeling of disloyalty quickly subside; four months later, when their Majesties were returning from Drury Lane, a stone was flung at the royal carriage which smashed one of the windows and struck Her Majesty in the cheek; a thousand pounds was offered as a reward for the discovery of the perpetrator of this act, but to no purpose. It is no wonder that, considering the state of popular feeling at the period, and the character of his successor, His Majesty felt assured, as he told Lord Eldon, that he should be the last King of England.

Early in January, 1796, the Princess of Wales gave birth to a daughter, and the privacy with

which this event was kept by the prince from their Majesties bore a striking resemblance to the conduct of Frederick, Prince of Wales, on a like occasion.

'You removed the princess,' wrote the king to his heir, 'twice in the week immediately preceding the day of her delivery, from the place of my residence, in expectation (as you voluntarily declared) of her labour, and both times, upon your return, you industriously concealed from the knowledge of me and the queen every circumstance relating to this important affair; and you at last, without giving notice to me or to the queen, precipitately hurried the princess from Hampton Court in a condition not to be named. After having thus, in execution of your own determined measures, exposed both the princess and her child to the greatest perils, you now plead surprise and tenderness for the princess as the only motives that occasioned these repeated indignities to me and to the queen your mother.'

But the repetition of history in this illustrious family did not end here; George I. had ordered George II. to quit St. James's, an example

which in due time George II. repeated to his son, Frederick, Prince of Wales, and now George III. in turn desired his heir to vacate the same palace.

The royal babe was baptised Charlotte, and a few months after its birth its unhappy parents separated for ever. The prince as usual absented himself from Carlton House; hints were given the princess that she should seek for a separation, which not being taken, Lord Cholmondeley informed her the prince did not mean to live with her any longer; she replied that such an intention should be conveyed to her directly from her husband in writing, and that, should a separation take place, their intercourse should never, under any circumstance, be again resumed. Nothing loth, the prince wrote to her at once. Commencing by styling her 'madam,' he goes on to say:

'Our inclinations are not in our power, nor should either of us be held responsible to the other because Nature has not made us suitable to each other. Tranquil and comfortable society is, however, in our power; let our intercourse, therefore, be restricted to that, and I will dis-

tinctly subscribe to the condition which you required through Lady Cholmondeley, that, even in the event of any accident happening to my daughter, which,' adds this virtuous prince, 'I trust Providence in its mercy will avert, I shall not infringe the terms of the restriction by proposing at any period a connection of a more particular nature.'

The princess was of course obliged to acquiesce to this fate without complaint. In her reply, she said his avowal merely confirmed what he had tacitly insinuated for twelve months; that she should not answer his letter, if it had not been conceived in terms which made it doubtful whether this arrangement proceeded from her or from him; 'and you are aware,' she adds, 'that the credit of it belongs to you alone.' As she had no protector but His Majesty, she referred herself solely to him, she said, on the subject, and then adds:

'I retain every sentiment of gratitude for the situation in which I find myself as Princess of Wales; enabled, by your means, to indulge in the free exercise of a virtue dear to my heart—I mean charity. It will be my duty,

likewise, to act upon another motive, that of giving an example of patience and resignation under every trial. Do me the justice to believe that I shall never cease to pray for your happiness, and to be your much devoted

‘CAROLINE.’

When the princess sought advice from the king, he suggested that an attempt at reconciliation should be made, and that she should show the prince some anxiety for his return. It was hard for an outraged woman to assume such a tone towards a man who had so grossly wronged her, but she was told it was her duty. She complied, and accordingly wrote to her truant husband :

‘I look forward with infinite pleasure to the moment that will bring you to Carlton House, and that will for ever terminate a misunderstanding which on my side, I assure you, will never be thought of again. If you do me the honour of seeking my society in future, I will do everything to make it agreeable to you. If I should displease you, you must be generous enough to forgive me, and count upon

my gratitude, which I shall feel to the end of my life. I may look for this, as mother of your daughter, and as one who is ever yours.'

To this humble appeal the profligate proved unmoved, and the princess retired to Charlton Villa, Blackheath, where she lived in the most unceremonious manner possible.

Thurlow, the Lord Chancellor, according to the Duke of Leeds' 'Memoranda,' came to the conclusion 'that the prince's strange conduct could only be imputed to madness;' and, years after, Charles Greville makes reference to this hereditary disease.

'I am persuaded,' he says, 'that the king' (George IV.) 'is subject to occasional impressions which produce effects like insanity; that, if they continue to increase, he will end by being decidedly mad.'

Lady Jersey had, by this time, fallen into disgrace with her royal lover, and was consequently dismissed, when the prince betrayed a desire to return to Mrs. Fitzherbert, who had separated from him on his marriage with the princess; but this wish of his was not acceded to with that readiness which he flattered him-

self it would have received. Mrs. Fitzherbert had, during the period of their interrupted intimacy, continued to maintain her magnificent establishment in Park Lane, which was supported by an allowance of £10,000 a year, made her by the prince, and had continued to entertain society. Her guests included not only the most distinguished members of the nobility, but even royalty itself, as represented in the persons of the dukes of the blood royal. There was not one of the royal family, she assured Lord Stourton, who had not acted with kindness to her, and, as for the king, 'from the time she set footing in England, till he ceased to reign, had he been her own father, he could not have acted towards her with greater tenderness and affection.' But, of all the family, the Duke of York constituted himself her special friend, and was generally the organ of communication between her and royalty; knowing that she had been so wronged, and had borne her injuries with such patience, they strove to make her all the compensation they could.

When, therefore, the prince urged his desire

of renewing his connection with her, she was much beset with difficulties and doubts as to whether she could do so with satisfaction to her own conscience ; and, whilst she hesitated, many members of this royal, but remarkable family, not only male, but female, urged a reconciliation, ‘ even upon a pretext of duty.’ Mrs. Fitzherbert’s scruples, indeed, went so far as to carry her to the highest authorities of her Church, and Father Nassau, a priest belonging to one of the ambassador’s chapels in Warwick Street, was dispatched to Rome to lay the intricate case before the Pope. His Holiness decided that, as her marriage with the prince was perfectly legitimate, she was justified in resuming her connection with her husband. The prince was delighted that his desires were thus acceded to, and urged her to allow him to take up his residence with her in a private manner ; but this she declined, and resolved that their reconciliation should be made as public as possible, for which purpose she gave a splendid breakfast, when not only the prince and his royal brothers attended, but all fashionable London.

For the next eight years they dwelt together, the prince living in comparative retirement, in order to retrench his expenses. They were extremely poor, but as merry as crickets; 'and, as a proof of their poverty, she told me,' says Lord Stourton, 'that once, on their returning to Brighton from London, they mustered their common means, and could not raise five pounds between them. Upon this or some other occasion, she related to me that an old and faithful servant endeavoured to force them to accept £60, which he said he had accumulated in the service of the best of masters and mistresses.' Their separation was due to the prince having formed a connection with Lady Hertford, and the subsequent humiliating slights which Mrs. Fitzherbert received. This time their parting was final.

CHAPTER IV.

Attempts on the King's Life—Margaret Nicholson and His Majesty—The Queen seized with a Consternation—The Madman at Drury Lane—Despard's Conspiracy—The Prince of Wales once more in Debt—Signs of the King's Malady—His Majesty's Fear of a Regency—Speaks of Resigning the Crown—His Visit to the Princess of Wales—The Queen Plays a New Part—The Town Divided into Factions.

DURING his reign three attempts were made on the life of the king, and, strange to say, two of the would-be regicides suffered from the affliction to which His Majesty was periodically subject. The first of these attacks was made by a woman, Margaret Nicholson, who, at the moment he was stepping from his carriage, in order to enter St. James's, suddenly broke from the crowd and presented him with a paper. The king stretched forward to take it, when, with a rapid movement, she aimed a blow at his heart

with a knife. His Majesty stepped back, and the demented Margaret made a second blow, but so thin-bladed, old, and worn was the weapon which she wielded in this tragic manner that, though it struck with full force against the royal waistcoat, it bent without penetrating. Those around now rushed in alarm on the woman, the knife was wrenched from her hands, and she was immediately secured. His Majesty, judging from the absurd manner with which she had attempted his life, declared her a lunatic. 'The poor creature is mad,' he said, with evident fellow-feeling; 'don't hurt her; she has not hurt me.'

The news of the attack was of course immediately exaggerated, seriously spoken of as a diabolical plot, and caused the greatest sensation. The queen, on first hearing from the king's lips that an attempt had been made on his life, was 'seized with a consternation,' as Miss Burney duly records, whilst a painful silence was only interrupted by the sobs of the princesses, and not a dry eye was to be found in the royal household except His Majesty's, who, being aware that he had been in no possible danger,

took a more sensible view of the occurrence than those loyal ones around him. In due time Margaret Nicholson had the honour of being twice examined before the Privy Council, where she explained her claims to the British throne, which were, however, not admitted, and stated her belief that it was only by the king's removal that she could come into her own. She was accordingly removed to Bedlam.

The later attempts of the king's life were of a more dangerous character. In the spring of 1800, His Majesty held a review in Hyde Park, when a musket-ball struck one of the clerks in the Navy office, who was standing within a few yards of the king, pierced through the fleshy part of his thigh, passed through the coat of a Frenchman, and finally this remarkable ball spent itself on the breast of a boy without doing him the least harm. It was impossible to trace from which direction it had come, or by whom it had been fired, as the Grenadier Guards were discharging a volley at the same instant. The king remained unmoved, and evinced not the slightest sign of fear. Within a few hours later, a third attack

was made, with, fortunately, as little effect as on the former occasions. The place selected for the design was Drury Lane Theatre, where the king had commanded the performance of Colley Cibber's comedy, 'She Would, and She Would Not ;' in which his son's mistress, Mrs. Jordan, was to appear.

Scarcely had the king entered the royal box, when he was seen by the audience, who applauded as usual, and, on his coming forward to bow his acknowledgments, a man in the front seat of the pit levelled a horse-pistol at him, and fired. His Majesty retired a step or two at the report, but, almost immediately recollecting himself, came forward, coolly took up his opera-glass, and surveyed the house as if nothing had happened to disturb him. Lord Salisbury, his lord chamberlain, far more agitated, urged him to retire, when he hastily turned round, and said, 'Sir, you discompose yourself as well as me. I shall not stir one step.'

The intended assassin was immediately seized and roughly dragged over the spikes of the orchestra into the music-room at the back of

the stage. He was found to be a lunatic named James Hadfield, who had formerly been a soldier in the 15th Light Dragoons, and who declared, with the air of a philosopher, he was tired of life, but had not the resolution to commit suicide. His pistol had contained two balls, one of which struck the wainscot a couple of feet above the king's head, and the other passed through a curtain some inches higher.

Meanwhile, the theatre was in a complete uproar from pit to gallery. Cheers, and cries of 'God save the king,' filled the house; and when Michael Kelly came forward to sing the National Anthem, he added a verse hastily composed for the occasion by the ready genius of Sheridan, which was received with immense applause. The words ran as follows :

‘ From every latent foe,
From the assassin's blow,
God save the king !
O'er him Thine arm extend,
For Britain's sake defend
Our father, prince, and friend,
God save the king !’

The king was indeed the person who appeared most free from agitation on the occasion.

When the queen presently arrived, he spoke to her in German, to calm her,

‘There was a squib,’ quoth he.

‘A squib!’ said she. ‘I heard the word pistol, and the report.’

‘Squib or pistol, the danger is now over, and you may come forward and make your bow,’ replied the royal spouse.

He then ordered the curtain to go up, and the play to begin as usual, and so strong was his inherent trait of imperturbability, that, between the comedy and the afterpiece, he was noticed to take a sound dose, as was usual with him whenever he attended the play.

Three years later, his life was supposed to be in danger through Despard’s conspiracy. Despard had been a brave soldier, who had fought at San Juan with Nelson, and more than once hazarded his life for his country’s glory. Unjustly discharged from a post which he had held in Honduras, refused a hearing, and indignant at a long confinement in Cold-Bath Fields’ prison, his loyalty turned to hate, and it was believed he resolved to overthrow the government, and destroy the king’s life.

At his trial, Lord Nelson came forward to give evidence of his heroism and loyalty in the past; he said,

‘We went on the Spanish Main together. We spent many nights together in our clothes upon the ground. We have measured the height of the enemy’s wall together. In all that period of time, no man could have shown more zealous attachment to his sovereign and his country than Colonel Despard did.’

But even such testimony did not rescue him from death, and in February, 1803, Colonel Edward Marcus Despard, with six confederates, stood condemned to die. Their execution, which took place at Horsemonger Lane Gaol, was attended by a crowd numbering over 20,000 people, all in a state of suppressed excitement. Colonel Despard appeared calm and resolute; he addressed the crowd as ‘fellow citizens,’ and told them that, after serving his country faithfully, honourably, and, he trusted, usefully, for thirty years, he was about to suffer death upon a scaffold for a crime of which he was not guilty.

‘But, fellow-citizens,’ he said, ‘I trust and

hope, notwithstanding my fate, and perhaps the fate of many others who may follow me, that still the principles of liberty, justice, and humanity will triumph over falsehood, despotism, and delusion, and everything else hostile to the interests of the human race.'

At the conclusion of this speech, ringing cheers burst from the vast crowd; then came the terrible moment when this man's soul was launched into eternity. After the execution, his head was severed from his body, when the headsman held it up to the crowd, exclaiming, 'This is the head of the traitor, Edward Marcus Despard,' at which the crowd hooted and hissed, and otherwise expressed feelings of disloyalty.

It may be mentioned here that, two days after Despard's execution, the Prince of Wales's debts were again brought before the nation, when a fresh appeal was daringly and shamelessly made for him. It was understood he wished to restore his establishment, but even the courtly Lord Malmesbury said that any fresh sums granted him would 'evidently be squandered away in the same way he has hitherto lived in, without his assuming any one

single exterior mark of royalty or splendour—to prove that he and his hangers-on do not consider it a farce.’ However, through the influence of Fox and the new premier, ‘the milk-and-water Addington,’ who was anxious to secure the favour of his future king, the country was once more heavily burdened, and a sum of £60,000 a year, for three years and a half, was bestowed upon this spendthrift prince.

Early in the year 1801, there were rumours abroad that the Roman Catholics had summoned up sufficient audacity to seek for an equality of those civil rights enjoyed by the rest of their fellow-subjects. Lord Castlereagh, it was known, had been for several weeks in London striving to negotiate for the measure with the government. Such a movement as this was looked on by the king, whose narrow-minded bigotry in his best moments strongly savoured of insanity, with positive horror, and he resolved that his opinions on the subject should be quickly known. Accordingly, when holding one of his ordinary levées in the latter part of January, he addressed Mr. Dundas, the only cabinet minister present. ‘What—what—what,’ said His

Sacred Majesty, abruptly, 'what is it that this young lord has brought over that they are going to throw at my head? The most Jacobinical thing I ever heard of. I shall reckon,' he added, in a still more flurried manner, 'any man my personal enemy who proposes any such measure. What—what—what?'

Dundas, nothing abashed by this royal speech, replied calmly, 'Your Majesty will find among those who are friendly to that measure some whom you never supposed to be your enemies.'

His hurried manner and flushed appearance was then little noticed, though it was afterwards remarked as probably the first indication of his old malady.

Shortly after this, Pitt wrote to the king, stating it as his opinion, and that of the majority of the cabinet, that the admission of Catholics and Dissenters to Parliament would, under certain conditions, serve to tranquillize Ireland, backing this statement with many strong arguments, and concluding by stating that his continuance in office must depend on His Majesty's consent to the proposed measures. The king wrathfully replied that his coronation oath pre-

vented him from entertaining such a proposal whereon Pitt sent in his resignation.

The king's mind was now far from tranquil ; he read the coronation oath repeatedly to himself, then to his family, and asked them if they understood it. 'If I violate it, I am no longer sovereign of the country,' he said ; he next read it to General Garth, informing that military man 'he had better beg his bread from door to door than consent to any measure which gave his Catholic subjects religious equality,' and finally he asked the Lord Chancellor's opinion on the question, having little doubt that it would fully agree with his own. But the Lord Chancellor held 'that His Majesty was not in any degree fettered by his coronation oath in giving the royal assent to a measure which should have the previous approbation of both Houses of Parliament ;' a conviction with which the king was highly indignant, as it suddenly bereft him of all hypocritical excuses for his gross illiberality.

A few days after Pitt's resignation, it was announced that the king was suffering from cold, and, a little later, His Majesty wrote to

the new prime minister, Addington, lauding James's powders, a medicine for which he entertained a special affection ; still no suspicions of his madness were entertained. He was now staying at Buckingham House, and, when Lord Chatham called there to see him, His Majesty said to him, with an air of great gravity, 'As for my cold, it is well ; but, what else I have, I owe to your brother' (Pitt). After some other of his friends had conversed with him, and noted the turn of his conversations, they were not unprepared to hear it announced that he was in a high fever ; for the treatment of which, strange enough, a medical man who made lunacy his special study, to wit Dr. Willis, was called in. None were now admitted to Buckingham House, except the physicians ; and, as on previous occasions, all details of the king's illness were kept as private as possible, yet the truth gradually leaked out that the ruler of Great Britain and Ireland was mad once more.

George Rose met Lord Essex, early in February, under the piazza of St. James's, when his lordship informed him that the king was entirely deranged. Entering the levée-room,

they found Lord Chesterfield, who spoke with great concern of the king, but said he knew of no particulars of his exact state, as no bulletins were issued. All through his illness, the scheme for Catholic emancipation preyed upon his mind; for a whole day he remained without uttering a word or taking anything, after which he persistingly exclaimed, 'But I will remain true to the church—I will remain true to the church—I will remain true to the church,' a statement which he duly followed up by mentioning the names of Pitt, Dundas, and Greville—ministers favourable to the measure—with hearty and horrible imprecations. He was then placed under restraint; but he declared he was not mad. His detestation and jealousy of the heir to the crown now came to the surface, unrestrained by any conventional pretence of paternal regard. Lord Brougham says that he hated the prince 'with a hatred scarcely consistent with the supposition of a sound mind;' but, now that his mind was diseased, this detestation became intensified; and he besought them not to send for the elder Dr. Willis, for there would be a Regency, in which case he

would never again resume his functions as sovereign.

During his attack, it was necessary to get his signature for the repeal of the Brown Bread Act, when a singular farce was gone through. The Chancellor took the commission for the bill to Buckingham House, but was told he could not see the king; however, Dr. Willis, who had always great influence over His Majesty, undertook to obtain the royal signature, to which his lordship agreed. Willis then informed the king that it was necessary he should sign his name to the paper. 'Then,' said the king, readily enough, 'I will sign my best George R.'

The merciful Duke of Cumberland subsequently told the Prince of Wales that, for such conduct, the Lord Chancellor deserved a rope and a hatchet. At last the king's illness became so serious that, for a brief while, his life was despaired of, during which time the prince was amusing himself about town as usual, and, at an evening concert given by Lady Hamilton, he asked the ex-French minister, '*Savez vous, Monsieur de Calone que*

mon père est aussi fou que jamais? The prince indeed really knew little of how the king did; for, when he called at Buckingham House, he was not permitted to see him, and was never communicated with as to the increase or decrease of his malady. But this attack of insanity, at least in its bad form, did not last long; early in March, on the night succeeding one of his most critical days, the king fell into a profound sleep, and awoke almost well.

On his recovery, he made some inquiries as to those who had asked for him, and regarding what had passed in the House of Commons, when he was told that one man had moved for an inquiry into the state of His Majesty's health. He asked who that was, and being informed it was Mr. Rich, 'Ah,' he replied, 'he was always an odd man.' His oddness at having dared to desire such an inquiry should be made was now glaringly perceptible. The king then bade Dr. Willis write to Lord Eldon, Addington, and Pitt of his recovery, and, speaking of the latter, he said,

‘Tell him I am now quite well—quite recovered from my illness; but what has he not to answer for who is the cause of my having been ill at all?’

When Pitt heard this, he informed His Majesty that he would never during his reign bring forward the question of Catholic emancipation; on hearing which, the king delightedly said, ‘Now my mind will be at ease.’

He was, however, far from being in the possession of his senses, and at the end of the month was unable to attend the drawing-room, at which both the queen and prince were present, when the latter, before a large number of courtiers, behaved with great rudeness to Her Majesty. A little later on, the king expressed an idea to the Prince of Wales, which had floated through his mind during his former madness, to the effect that he would resign the crown. On hearing such a delightful piece of intelligence, the prince sent in hot haste for Lord Eldon, the Lord Chancellor, and, as the Hon. George Rose mentions in his diaries, informed him that His Majesty was anxious to devolve the government on him (the prince),

‘that he wished, therefore, the Chancellor would consider the proper mode of that being carried into effect, and that it was the king’s intention to retire to Hanover or to America.’ The prince also visited Lord Rosslyn on the subject, but neither of their lordships seem to have given the matter serious consideration; the prince then informed them it was the wishes of the queen and of his brothers to take measures for confining His Majesty, and that he, the prince, much objected to the attendance of the Willises; but the Lord Chancellor informed him they were placed about the king’s person from ‘notorious necessity.’

In May the king and the royal family retired to Kew, and in this month he was thought sufficiently well to preside at a privy council. No sooner was he allowed to ride alone than he paid a visit to the Princess of Wales, whose unhappy situation had given him much uneasiness during his madness.

‘The first time he rode out after his illness,’ writes Lord Minto, ‘he rode over Westminster Bridge to Blackheath, never telling anyone where he was going till he turned up to the

princess's door. She was not up, but jumped out of bed, and went to receive him in her bed-gown and night-cap. He told Lord Uxbridge that the princess had run in his head during his illness perpetually, and he had made a resolution to go and see her the first time he went out, without telling anybody.'

Though he continued for ten years subsequently to wield the sceptre of the most important nation in Europe, it is doubtful if he ever recovered his senses. Three years later, in 1804, he was ill again, when the Prince of Wales had an interview with him, an account of which he at once communicated to Charles Fox, who, speaking of this visit, says: 'There was no cordiality or pretended affection, but common talk on weather, scandal, &c.—a great deal of the latter—and as the prince thought very idle and foolish in this manner, and running wildly from topic to topic, though not absolutely incoherent.'

At this unhappy period, the queen, always heretofore his friend and comforter, now shrank from him, fearing some outbreak of his dreaded frenzy. This conduct on her part grieved him

intensely. Lord Colchester, in his diaries, says : 'The queen lives upon ill terms with the king. They never sleep or dine together ; she persists in living entirely separate ;' a statement to which Lord Malmesbury adds his testimony.

'The queen,' says his lordship, 'will never receive the king without one of the princesses being present ; never says in reply a word. Piques herself on this discreet silence, and, when in London, locks the door of her white-room—her boudoir—against him.'

After many fluctuations of sanity and insanity, the king became so violent that he had to be subjected to the strait-waistcoat ; he also at this time suffered considerably from gout, when his legs swelled to a vast size, and his general health became so bad that his life was considered in imminent danger. Once more the Prince of Wales's hopes rose ; the king's madness, he confidentially assured Pitt, must last for several months ; a regency was again in contemplation, when His Majesty once more rapidly grew better, and was taken out in a carriage by the queen and driven through the principal streets to show his subjects how far he had recovered.

During his illness, the town had been, as usual, divided in its allegiance towards the king and the prince; the former announced that His Majesty was perfectly well, whilst the latter hinted at dark things regarding their sovereign's health. Lady Malmesbury, indignant that the new doctors who attended the king issued bulletins contrary to her desires, loudly proclaimed them merely 'signing physicians,' who set their names to what others reported; whilst one of the royal maids-of-honour wished them, 'As the Spaniards say, with Mahomet.' But, in the midst of this party warfare, 'Everybody,' says Lord Minto, 'goes to see "Valentine and Orson," and weep over the death of a bear.'

CHAPTER V.

The Princess of Wales in Retirement—The Young Princess and her Mother—The Douglas Scandal and its Consequences—The Secret Commission—The Princess Triumphs—Her Popularity Increased—The Real Lord Byron—The Princess's Indiscretions and Eccentricities—The Prince's Amour with Lady Hertford—The Regency Commences—The Princess's Visit to Windsor—Fresh Insults—The Feelings of the People.

DURING the early years of her separation, the Princess of Wales lived at Blackheath in comparative retirement, taking little part in the state ceremonies; holding no Court, but receiving her friends, whom she delighted to entertain with pleasant dinners and *petits soupers*, which were all the merrier from the hostess's hatred of ceremony. Her guests, at this time, numbered some of the most brilliant members of the nobility, and many of the most distinguished foreigners of the day; amongst

the latter were the Comte d'Artois, afterwards Charles X., the Duc de Barri, Prince de Condé, and Duc de Bourbon. In private, her life was solaced by the company of her little daughter, then a most promising and vivacious child, who bade fair to become an interesting and clever woman. Lord Minto, who became the princess's friend and adviser, gives us a pleasant picture of a few hours he spent at Blackheath in 1798.

'Our dinner,' he writes, 'consisted of Lady Jane Dundas, Lady Charlotte Grenville, and Lady Mary Bentinck. Some men, among whom was Tom Grenville, disappointed her. Princess Charlotte was in the room till dinner, and is really one of the finest and pleasantest children I ever saw. The Princess of Wales romped with her about the carpet on her knees. Princess Charlotte, though very lively, and excessively fond of romps and play, is remarkably good and governable. One day she had been a little naughty, however, and they were reprimanding her. Amongst the rest, Miss Garth said to her,

"You have been so very naughty, I don't know what we must do with you."

'The little girl answered, crying, and quite penitently,

"You must *soot* me;" meaning shoot her; but they let her off rather cheaper. Our dinner was pleasant as could be.'

But the keen delight which the society of her child afforded the princess, was not long permitted her; and, under the plea that her surroundings were not suitable to the education of the heiress-apparent to the throne, the prince desired to take her under his own care; but here the king, fortunately, stepped in, and seeing the malignity which prompted this act, as well as fearing the pernicious influence of Carlton House, he insisted on the equal right of the unhappy mother to instruct her child, and claimed for himself the duty and responsibility of her education. The prince, who had not looked for interference in this quarter, angrily remonstrated, declared this was a direct insult offered him, refused to relinquish his paternal rights, and avowed that nothing but 'strong, particular reasons' could justify His Majesty in his conduct. The king promptly admitted that he was influenced by 'strong, particular rea-

sons,' and that necessity, as well as law, precedent, and the wishes of the mother required he should become the guardian of his grandchild. To this the prince, after much fume and fury, acting on the advice of Mrs. Fitzherbert and his ex-mistress, now Mrs. Charles Fox, submitted. The Princess Charlotte was then removed to a house in the vicinity of Blackheath, where she was placed under the charge of Lady Elgin; and the intercourse between mother and daughter was limited to a weekly visit.

The maternal feelings of the princess, being thwarted in this way, found vent in adopting children, and placing them out under care in the village, where she constantly visited them; but, not satisfied with this, she subsequently had one of them, an infant of a few months old, named William Austin, removed to her own house, where she tended him with the greatest care and affection, an indiscretion she soon had cause to bitterly repent. Her interest in children, indeed, prompted her to form the acquaintance of a woman who subsequently almost effected her ruin. Hearing that her neighbour, Lady Douglas, had been confined of a remark-

ably fine infant, she, with that want of discretion and thought so characteristic of her, without making any inquiries as to her ladyship, called on her, and an acquaintance so commenced soon ripened into intimacy. Lady Douglas was the daughter of a soldier who rose to the rank of colonel; being a handsome and vivacious woman, she succeeded in marrying Sir John Douglas, a warrior of some renown.

Soon after the princess made her acquaintance, Sir Sidney Smith, an old naval friend of Sir John's, returned to England, and became almost a part of the Douglas family. Sir Sidney in due course became known to the princess, and visited her frequently, a circumstance of which Lady Douglas, whose reputation, it may be mentioned, was not above reproach, by no means approved, and at which she could not conceal her resentment. The friendship between her and the princess lasted two years, when the Douglasses went to Devonshire. In their absence, the princess came to hear of some remarks her ladyship had made concerning her, and she then for the first time made inquiries into Lady Douglas's character, which had not a

satisfactory result; accordingly, when on my lady's return to Blackheath, she called on the princess, Her Royal Highness refused to see her, and directed one of her ladies to write and request Lady Douglas not to visit her again.

This woman so scorned became a dangerous thing, and she resolved to have her revenge. Soon after, she declared, she received by the twopenny post a very coarse drawing, which was accompanied by an anonymous letter, charging her with intriguing with Sir Sidney Smith, and other indiscretions; this she affirmed to be written 'by that mischievous person, the Princess of Wales;' and the language it contained, she added, 'would have disgraced a housemaid.' Hearing of the accusation, the princess sent for the Duke of Kent, and brought him to defend her from the charge; accordingly, he had an interview with Sir John Douglas and Sir Sidney Smith, when the matter was allowed to drop.

But this arrangement by no means suited Lady Douglas's plans, and she now freely circulated not only the story of the letter, but, by an afterthought, several scandalous charges

against the princess, some of which soon reached the Duke of Sussex's ears, who promptly demanded an interview with her. To him she made the most infamous statements, cleverly calculated to completely ruin the honour of the friendless woman who had slighted her. The princess, she informed the royal duke, was not only a coarse, but a vicious woman; that she had acknowledged to her some time since she was about to become a mother; that her person had even evidence of pregnancy; and that to baffle suspicion, she had pretended to adopt a child who was in reality her own.

The Duke of Sussex immediately rushed, not to the slandered woman for explanation or denial, but to the Prince of Wales, who hailed this chance of ridding himself of the woman he so unjustly hated with signs of rejoicing; these base charges were accordingly taken down in full detail and submitted to Lord Thurlow and Sir Samuel Romilly. The former declared at once he did not believe Lady Douglas's incoherent statements, that they 'did not hang together,' and had no dates. The princely husband was, however, by no means rejoiced

at such an opinion of his wife's virtue, and a commission was therefore formed to take the evidence of witnesses to whom the immaculate Lady Douglas referred. Over five months were expended in striving to get up a case as damning as possible, which should be sufficient to blast the princess's reputation for ever. The light of publicity was withheld from the sittings of the commission, and neither the accused nor her representative counsel were permitted to be present; moreover, the witnesses, after examination, were enjoined to secrecy, and no cross-examination was allowed.

The principal witnesses against Her Royal Highness were her own servants, who had been appointed to her household by their prince, and whom she was humiliatingly forced to take back again into her service. One of these, John Cole, whom she had recently insisted on discharging, bore testimony that criminal intercourse had taken place between the princess and Captain Manby, and Sir Sidney Smith; whilst another of them, Bidgood, who had been seen in serious converse with Lady Douglas, accused the princess of like conduct with Cap-

tain Hood, and Lawrence the painter. Sir John and Lady Douglas also made their charges of her having been delivered of a child; but, notwithstanding the manner, in every way prejudicial to the princess, in which the commission was conducted, the evidence was completely rebutted by the princess's medical attendant and other trustworthy witnesses; whilst the crowning blow was dealt her slanderers by the positive proof given that the boy Austin was the son of a shoemaker, born in Brownlow Street Hospital. The whole testimony was now laid before the king, who, though satisfied of her innocence, yet allowed nine weeks of cruel suspense to pass without communicating with her; at the end of that time the princess addressed a letter to him, begging that he would hasten his judgment on the matter, and grant her relief, for this unhappy delay caused her to sink in the regard of his subjects, and gave an unfair and temporary triumph to her enemies.

No notice was taken of this appeal, when letters came from the unfortunate princess's parents imploring that a decision might be given;

but yet over two months were allowed to elapse since the princess had written, before His Gracious Majesty deigned to reply. The facts of the case, he said, did not warrant any further steps to be taken by the government, excepting such as his law servants might think fit to recommend for the prosecution of Lady Douglas; that there was no longer a necessity for him to decline receiving the princess into his royal presence; that he had seen with satisfaction the decided proofs of the falsehood of the accusation of her pregnancy and delivery; but that there were other evidences against her which he regarded with serious concern. These circumstances were her easy condescension and ready familiarity, which often amounted to indiscretion, in her bearing to those around her, and which were most deadly sins in the eyes of his sacred and ceremonious loving Majesty.

Upon receiving this letter, she wrote, requesting permission to wait on the king at Windsor—a favour denied her since her accusation—to which he replied he would prefer seeing her in town some day during the week, of which

he would duly apprise her. A short time after this, a second note came from His Majesty, which caused her some alarm. Lest she might be led to expect, from his former letter, that he would name a day for her reception, His Majesty thought it right to acquaint her that the prince, on receiving the documents concerning her investigation, made a formal statement to him of his intention to put them into the hands of his lawyers; and prayed that His Majesty would suspend any further steps in the matter until the prince should be able to submit to him the statement he proposed to make. The king, therefore, deferred naming a day for seeing her for the present.

To this she replied that she had already been banished seven months from the royal family, pending an inquiry affecting both her life and honour; that at the termination of the inquiry, and the opinion of his sworn servants, there was no longer any reason why His Majesty should decline to receive her, she now found a renewed application on the part of the Prince of Wales—at whose desire the first investigation had been directed—which was an infliction she

hoped His Majesty would avert; she therefore besought him to allow her to pay her duty to him. The king made no answer, when she wrote once more to express her disappointment, and to acquaint him that, unless the justice was done her of being received by him, she felt herself bound to take a step which he might regret.

The step to which she referred was the publication of her case, in the shape of an appeal to the nation for the justice denied her by the Court. It was prepared by Spencer Percival, afterwards premier, who was assisted by a member of Parliament, and printed by Edwards, of Crane Court, Fleet Street. The most profound secrecy was observed regarding it. Five thousand copies of the work were got ready for circulation, but at the last moment were not distributed, owing to the fact that the existing ministry, which was hostile to the princess, was turned out of office, and was duly replaced by one, the members of which were her friends, Mr. Percival being First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. A few copies of this appeal,

known as 'The Book,' which escaped being delivered to Mr. Percival, were subsequently purchased by government for the respective and respectable sums of £1,500, £1,000, £750, and £500. The new cabinet quickly informed the king that, in its opinion, it was 'essentially necessary, in justice to Her Royal Highness, that she should be admitted with as little delay as possible to His Majesty's presence, and that she should be received in a manner due to her rank and station in His Majesty's Court and family.' Nor was this all; His Majesty's confidential servants thought it due to her to request that some apartments might be allotted to her in one of the royal palaces for her more convenient attendance at Court; she was therefore allowed the use of rooms at Kensington Palace.

That strong sympathy with those unjustly persecuted which is ever to be found in English breasts was now thoroughly roused throughout the nation in favour of the princess, and the formal acknowledgment of her acquittal was hailed with universal rejoicing. The prince, already feared and disliked, now became despised and detested; satires the most bitter and

malicious, charging him with heinous crimes, were freely levelled at him and his friends; whilst ballads in favour of his deserted wife were sung in the streets generally, and in front of Carlton House particularly. Her portraits were exhibited in the shop-windows; her appearance in public was the signal for loud and continued cheering, and even at her first attendance, after her trial, at the royal drawing-room, she was greeted by the courtiers with clapping of hands. The queen and princesses received her on this occasion with marked coldness, satisfying themselves with curtseying to her in a frigid, ceremonious manner, but the king was as friendly as usual. When his birthday was celebrated in the following month, she again went to Court, where by some accident she encountered her husband face to face before a vast and brilliant crowd. The scene was dramatic; the courtiers respectfully drew back, leaving these two figures alone and prominent in the great drawing-room of St. James's, in the presence of royalty; for a second the prince hesitated, then made a cold, stately bow, which she gracefully returned, after which they ex-

changed a few words which could not be overheard, and then they passed on, never again to meet in this world.

A few months after this occurrence, the princess's mother, the Duchess of Brunswick, whose husband had recently died from wounds received at the battle of Jena, sought a refuge in England, as the forces of Napoleon then occupied Brunswick; she was accordingly welcomed by His Majesty with some show of affection, and permitted to take up her residence with her daughter at Blackheath. The private life of the princess, which had before been considered indiscreet, now became almost reckless; moods of wretchedness and depression were succeeded by a frivolity and daring that was censured by her enemies and regretted by her friends. At her residence at Blackheath, or at her rooms at Kensington Palace, she still continued to give dinners and suppers, where little ceremony was observed, and where oftentimes discretion and modesty were trenched upon in favour of wit. These entertainments commenced late, and usually lasted till dawn, the hostess being reluctant to rise from the table when surrounded by agreeable society.

At one of these suppers Lady Charlotte Campbell was present, and gives a graphic description of it.

‘A very agreeable party,’ she writes, ‘but unfortunately the princess prolonged her pleasures till they became pains. No appetite for converse, no strength of nerves, no love for any individual who might be present, could possibly enable any person who was not royal (they certainly are gifted with supernatural strength) to sit for five or six hours at a table, and keep vigil till morning light. Some one, I remember, present that night, ventured to hint that morning was at hand. “Ah!” said the princess, “God He knows when we may all meet again—to tell God’s truth, when I am happy and comfortable, I could sit on for ever.”’

At her dinners and suppers she was apt to talk with great freedom and length of her grievances, which were very bitter to her, but which, being narrated incessantly, became monotonous to her friends; however, on one occasion she had a new listener in the person of Mr. Wells, who ‘drank punch till he wept, chimed in with all the princess said, and ended

by pulling off his wig *par sentiment.*' She occasionally invited poets and philosophers to enjoy the substantial delights of this world at her table, to which, strange to say, they were not adverse. Amongst her friends were 'Monk' Lewis, Campbell, Walter Scott, the eccentric Lady Caroline Lamb, who followed in the wake of Lord Byron, Viscount Melbourne, a man addicted to pleasure, Lady Oxford, and Mr. Ward, afterwards known as Lord Dudley, and always regarded as a mad man.

When Thomas Campbell the poet, described as being 'excellent company when allowed to soar in his own sphere, but totally unfit for the world, and ignorant of its ways as a child,' was introduced to the princess, he by no means delighted her by reciting verses for which she did not care, but, on a subsequent occasion, he pleased her much better by dancing a Highland reel with her in her drawing-room. Another child of the Muses who was introduced to her was Lord Byron, then the most remarkable man in society. An acquaintance followed, and the princess on one occasion told the poet there were two Lord Byrons, one known to

the world at large, and another, the real Lord Byron, known to her.

‘When I invite him,’ she said, ‘I say, I ask the agreeable lord, not the disagreeable one. He takes my *plaisanterie* all in good part, and I flatter myself I am rather a favourite with this great bard.’

How the poet celebrated her husband’s traits all generations shall read. The admiration she entertained for this wicked peer was by no means shared with Mr. Greville, whose name the world has heard.

‘The princess hates him,’ writes Lady Charlotte Campbell. ‘She says he is so mischievous and so tattling. She added, “I could forgive him for anything he said of myself, because I have good broad shoulders; but he calls my daughter an abandon’d little thing, and, damn me [she often swears that oath], if ever he shall meet her at this house again. The case was, you see, that Mr. Greville abuse all the royal family to her, vich was a great impertinence, as I should say, and she, poor little ting, wanted to excuse dem; so, wen Mr. Greville, in his wisdom, said it was pity the duke should

have his mistress here, *vare de princesse vas*, she answered, Oh, lord upon us, *vat* would you have; *de dukes* cannot marry, *dey* must love somebody; but she is a young *ting*, and not prepared for such matters.’

When the royal refugees, Louis XVIII., Madame d’Angouleme, and the French princes, sought safety in England, the princess invited them to a breakfast, to which her mother and the Princess Sophia were likewise bidden; but, at a hint from the Prince of Wales, Louis XVIII. and Madame d’Angouleme suddenly found themselves suffering; the one from gout in the knee and toe, the other from a swelled face, and so painful were these ailments on the morning fixed for the breakfast, that they were quite unable to accept the princess’s hospitality.

‘So that,’ she writes, ‘I have not been blest with a sight of these charming creatures. Still I was reduced to the satisfaction of having forty, including my own family, to this great feast. The sight was not enchanting, as it was loaded with old fograms. My usual resource on this occasion is to show them the

great apartments and the rarities they contain. At last (everything, alas! ends) we were obliged to take to another resource, which was walking in the great avenue; and there we walked with all the plebeians and all the mobs. As our conviviality was exhausted, as well as our wit, the military band supplied the sound of our voices. We lounged there till, happily, the clock struck eight, and the party was swept away like magic.'

Her desire of dispensing with all ceremony was occasionally carried too far, as may be judged from the fact that, when she was one day about to visit the British Museum, and three of her gentlemen, Mercer, Craven, and Sir William Gell stood waiting to attend her, 'Now,' she said, turning to them, 'toss up a guinea to know which shall be the happy man to come with me.' Alas! these gentlemen three had not a guinea between them, and she was forced to name which should go with her. Sometimes, accompanied by but one of the ladies dressed 'in a costume very unsuited to the public highway,' the principal feature of which was her short dress and petticoats, she

would walk about the roads of Kensington, and over to Bayswater. One day, whilst in this district, she inquired at all the houses in the neighbourhood if there were any to let, and felt an almost childish delight in such a pastime. On another occasion she set out for a walk with three of her ladies round Kensington Gardens, after which she sat down on a bench occupied by two old dames, with whom she freely entered into conversation; and they, being ignorant of who she was, asked them a number of questions about herself, to all of which they replied in most favourable terms; they finally expressed a great desire to see her injured Royal Highness, when she told them, if they would stand at the garden-door at twelve o'clock next day, they would be sure to see her.

But perhaps her greatest indiscretion was in speaking of her husband in unguarded terms, being surrounded by those whom he had placed in her service, who carried all her words back to him. One of Lord Minto's correspondents writes to him that the princess came into the drawing-room with a book in her hand, crying, 'Here, my dear, read, read; tell Lord Minto

directly that I am in love with his friend Mr. Burke. He has drawn the prince's character exactly, exactly; read it, read it—"A man without any sense of duty as a prince, without any regard to the dignity of his crown, and without any love to his people; dissolute, false, venal, and destitute of any positive good quality whatever, except a pleasant temper and the manners of a gentleman." Ask Lord Minto if it is not quite like him.' At one of her dinners, she spoke to those around her of her unhappy marriage. 'I, you know, was the victim of mammon,' she said; 'the Prince of Wales's debts must be paid, and poor little I's person was the pretence. Parliament would vote supplies for the heir-apparent's marriage; the king would help his little help. A Protestant princess must be found—they fixed upon the prince's cousin. To tell you God's truth, I always hated it; but to oblige my father, anything. But the first moment I saw my *futur* and Lady Jersey together, I knew how it all was, and I said to myself, "Oh! very well." I took my *parti*—and so it would have been if—but oh! mine God, I could be the slave of a man I love, but

to one whom I loved not, and did not love me—impossible—*c'est autre chose.*'

On another occasion she favoured a friend of hers with some particulars regarding her wedding night.

'After the play,' writes the author of 'The Memoirs of the Times of George IV.,' 'I was invited to sup with Her Royal Highness; as usual, she talked of her own situation and her previous life. "Judge," said she, "what it was to have a drunken husband on one's wedding-day, and one who passed the greatest part of his bridal-night under the grate, where he fell, and where I left him. If anybody said to me at dis moment, will you pass your life over again, or be killed, I would choose death, for, you know, a little sooner or later, we must all die; but to live a life of wretchedness twice over—oh, mine God, no!"' The same authority tells of a strange practice of the princess's. 'After dinner, Her Royal Highness made a wax figure as usual, and gave it an amiable edition of large horns; then took three pins out of her garment, and stuck them through and through, and put the figure to roast and melt at the fire.

If it was not too melancholy to have to do with this, I could have died with laughing. The princess indulges in this amusement whenever there are no strangers at table, and she has a superstitious belief that destroying this effigy of her husband will bring to pass the destruction of his royal person.'

Her mother, the Duchess of Brunswick, set down these traits to the same malady which affected the king; she deplored them to Lord Redesdale, and, tapping her forehead, said, 'But her excuse is, poor thing, that she is not right here.'

In the meantime, the princess was made aware of her husband's new intrigue with the Marchioness of Hertford; a Venus who, though advanced in years, had not virtue or wisdom sufficient to repel the royal profligate. She had indeed at first refused his suit, but opposition had served to increase his passion, and, in order to render himself interesting in her eyes, and show her how his rejected love preyed upon his heart, he strove to reduce his rotund person, and tone down his rubicund complexion by having himself bled for her sweet sake.

This was not an infrequent practice of his, and, according to Lord Holland, he had himself operated on several times by various doctors, when 'there was so little necessity for it, that different surgeons were introduced for the purpose, unknown to each other, lest they should object to so unusual a loss of blood.' About this time, he had just broken off a connection with the charming Lady Massarene, the daughter of a French gaoler, who became the wife of an Irish peer; and, though His Royal Highness's passion for her was brief, her love for him lasted till her death.

In a connection which, about this time, he strove to establish with another fair woman, the regent was not attended by that usual success which almost invariably attended him. This new lady who found favour in the royal eyes was Lady Yarmouth, then young and beautiful. The prince had long sighed for her love, but sighed in vain. It happened that one day, when the first gentleman in Europe had partaken of Lord Yarmouth's hospitality, and the party had broken up, the prince contrived to lure Lady Yarmouth into an ante-

room, where taking advantage of the opportunity he had long sought, he told her of his passion, and proceeded to kiss her, on which her ladyship was so uncourtly as to scream, a proceeding on her part which quickly brought her husband on the scene, who, in a paroxysm of passion, struck the prince, and inflicted several injuries on the royal person, some of which caused much subsequent discoloration in the vicinity of his eyes. This treatment caused him for several days to seek the retirement of Carlton House, it being intimated to the public that he suffered from a severe sprain. By degrees, however, the story crept out, and was whispered through the town, hinted at in the press, until finally Peter Pindar celebrated it in verse, under the title of 'A Kick from Yarmouth to Wales;' a publication which ran through several editions, and gained enormous popularity.

The time had now arrived when the Princess of Wales was permanently to lose her chief friend and protector—the king, who, already stricken by blindness, afflicted by the conduct of his eldest son, agitated by political events,

and sorely grieved by the death of his favourite daughter, the Princess Amelia, was again deprived of his reason, a condition from which he never wholly recovered. His last appearance in society was on the anniversary of his accession, when the queen assembled all her children but two at Windsor Castle. The king, looking haggard, old, and helpless from loss of sight, came into the drawing-room leaning on the queen, when he went round, speaking to all who were present; but in that excited and flurried manner which usually preceded his attacks of madness. This was in the latter part of the year 1810, and in the early months of the new year his mind became gradually worse; at times he had the power of calmly conversing on various subjects, but was beset with certain hallucinations, some of which were painful to those around him. One of these was that his daughter just dead—'his poor Amelia'—was living at Hanover, and was not only perfectly well, but was in the enjoyment of everlasting health and youth; another was that he had an intrigue with the Countess of Pembroke, a lady of spotless reputation, who,

in her youth, and, in the first years of his reign, had been one of the chief ornaments of the Court; occasionally, he protested that she was his wife, and was wrathful that he was not permitted to see her. Once he said to the Duke of Sussex,

‘Is it not a strange thing, Adolphus, that they still refuse to let me go to Lady Pembroke, although everyone knows I am married to her; but, what is worse of all, is that infamous scoundrel Halford was by at the marriage, and has now the effrontery to deny it to my face.’

On the declaration of the physicians that His Majesty was unfit to transact any business of the State, a Regency Bill was once more introduced, constituting the Prince of Wales regent, under certain restrictions, which were to be removed at the end of the year, in case the king did not recover; these were that he was unable to grant peerages except for naval or military services, or award pensions or places for life. The charge of the king and his household were naturally given to the queen, at which, as the latter conferred considerable poli-

tical influence on those who possessed it, the prince was wroth indeed. He expected, he said, to be treated as a gentleman, not as a ruffian, and considered this power given to Her Majesty as a direct insult to himself; an opinion in which his royal brothers of course agreed, and they protested against such a privilege being given to their mother, to the disgust, but not the surprise, of the nation.

During the first year of the regency, the king's state continued changeable; for days his mind wandered hopelessly, and again he was so well that it was anticipated he would resume the reins of government before the twelve months had expired. He was so well indeed in May that he was allowed to ride out.

'On Sunday night, May 20,' writes one of the inhabitants of Windsor, 'our town was in a fever of excitement at the authorised report that the next day the physicians would allow His Majesty to appear in public. On that Monday morning it was said that his saddle-horse was to be got ready. This truly was no wild rumour. We crowded to the park and the castle-yard. The favourite horse was there. The venerable

man, blind, but steady, was soon in the saddle, as I had often seen him—a hobby groom at his side with a leading-rein. He rode through the Little Park to the Great Park. The bells rang. The troops fired a *feu de joie*. The king returned to the castle within an hour. He was never again seen without those walls.'

Shortly after this ride, his affliction returned, and by the end of the year all hopes of his ultimate recovery were abandoned, and the Prince of Wales was allowed the full powers of a king.

'No prince,' says Lord Brougham, 'ever ascended the throne with so universal a feeling of distrust and even aversion.' On his way to open Parliament in full state, he seemed nervous and anxious, and was received with dead silence by the crowd which had collected to see the procession; not a hat was taken off, not a cheer greeted him, a circumstance which caused bitter disappointment to one so fond of public approbation. But his displeasure was heightened presently by the behaviour of his daughter, the Princess Charlotte, who, with two of the royal princesses, was present in the House of Lords, sitting on the woosack near

the throne, from which position she spoke to one peer and nodded to another, both of whom befriended her mother's cause.

‘It was remarked,’ said Lady Charlotte Campbell, ‘that she talked and laughed much, turned her back upon her papa, and had a certain expressive smile which did not displease all the lords nor all the ladies there. The prince, it is said, was much displeased at her manner.’

His unpopularity by no means diminished with time, as may be judged by a letter written by Fremantle to the Marquis of Buckingham in the following year. Speaking of the regent, he says :

‘When he came to the drawing-room on Thursday, he was in his stage-coach, with all the parade of royalty and grandeur, and there were upwards of ten thousand people in Pall Mall, through which he passed, and where he was met by one single token of applause. It was a dead silence throughout . . . After declaring publicly, right and left, his intention of going to the Lord Mayor, his nerves failed him, and he sent an excuse. I am confident he would have been hissed through the City. The

addresses on the assumption of the regency have failed throughout England, and there is hardly a quarter in which the attempt has not been made to procure them.'

Since the last outbreak of the king's madness, great restrictions were placed on the intercourse between the princess and her daughter; they met but once a week, but were never allowed to see each other unless in the presence of a third person; even this weekly meeting was, after awhile, prevented by the Princess Charlotte's removal to Windsor on a visit to her royal grandmother. Her continued absence at last became almost unendurable to the Princess of Wales, who, whatever her faults may have been, loved her daughter; she therefore wrote to the queen, beseeching her to grant her permission to see her child, offering to visit her at Windsor, if she could not attend on her; to which petition Her Gracious Majesty sent back word that Her Royal Highness's studies must not be interrupted.

But, time going by, and their meeting being still prevented, the princess fearing a total separation was intended, went to Windsor,

selecting Sunday for her visit, as a day on which no excuse for the interruption of studies could be made. When she reached the castle, she was cruelly refused permission to see her daughter, on which she requested an interview with the queen, in order, if possible, to move her to her desires; but, though Her Majesty granted the interview, she refused the princess's request. The Prince Regent had given strict orders, Her Majesty said, not to allow a meeting between the Princess of Wales and her daughter. The queen's manners were as ceremonious and cold as ever, and no refreshments were offered to the royal visitor.

At parting, Her Majesty said, as she helped herself to a liberal pinch of snuff, ‘I hope you will always preserve the same friendship which you have ever felt for me;’ to which the princess, bowing to the little old woman with profound reverence, answered in most bitter irony, ‘Oh, certainly, Your Majesty;’ and then left the room, almost choked with tears. After this interview, she received an insulting message from one of the Ministers

of State, informing her the Prince Regent forbade her going to Windsor again.

Soon after this, however, an unexpected meeting took place between the unhappy mother and her daughter. It chanced that, as the Princess of Wales was out driving one day, she saw her daughter's carriage being driven in another direction; she immediately gave orders to her coachman to follow it, when something like a pursuit took place, but the young princess's coach, which had entered Hyde Park, was ultimately overtaken near the Serpentine, and both leaned forward from their respective carriages to kiss, and hold some minutes' conversation, being surrounded meanwhile by a crowd of eager sympathisers. About this time, another occurrence took place, which caused considerable annoyance to the royal grandmother and the regent.

The Princess Charlotte had now arrived at an age when it was considered desirable she should be formally presented at Court; arrangements were therefore made for the event, and a day fixed on; it was also arranged by the regent that his daughter's presentation

should be made by the Duchess of York, or some other of the female branches of the royal family, but the young princess stoutly declared she would be presented by her mother, and by her mother alone. Her illustrious father had by this time come to learn that she had a will of her own, and the matter was allowed to rest. Accordingly, the appointed day having arrived, the Princess of Wales and her daughter were dressed and ready for the ceremony, and were about to set out for St. James's when, at the last moment, a message was sent from the regent to his daughter, informing her a presentation by her mother would not be allowed.

'It shall either be my mother or no one,' she spiritedly replied.

The result was that her presentation did not take place.

The restrictions now placed between them became so severe, and so grievous to both, that the Princess of Wales, acting on legal advice, determined to bring her painful situation before Parliament. Before doing so, however, she addressed a touching letter to her

husband, in which she said she was at length compelled, either to abandon all regard for the two dearest objects she had on earth, her honour and her child, or to throw herself at his feet, who should be the natural protector of both. She represented that the separation between herself and her daughter could only admit of one construction in the eyes of the world, and that was one fatal to her own reputation. She implored him to reflect on the situation in which she was placed, without the shadow of a charge against her, yet treated, she adds, 'as if I were still more culpable than the perjuries of my *suborned traducers* represented me, and held me up to the world as a mother who may not enjoy the society of her own child.'

This letter was forwarded to the regent under the care of Lords Eldon and Liverpool, but next day was returned unopened; again the princess had it forwarded, intimating to these noble lords, that, as it contained matter of importance to the State, she relied on their laying it before His Royal Highness; next day, however, it was again sent back unopened.

A third time she forwarded it, expressing her confidence that Lords Eldon and Liverpool would not take upon themselves the responsibility of not communicating the letter to the prince, and that she should be the only subject in his empire whose petition was not to be permitted to reach the throne. To this an answer was made, that the contents of her communication had been laid before the regent, who had no answer to make : upon which she sent her letter to the *Morning Chronicle* for publication, from which journal it was copied into almost every newspaper of the day. The immediate sensation it produced throughout the nation can scarcely be conceived ; the prince's rage was so great that for a time it almost deprived him of reason ; whilst the sympathy it evoked from men and women of all classes for the unhappy mother, was mingled with the fiercest indignation against her persecutor.

A privy council was hastily called together, and of course gave expression to the regent's wishes ; the lords, which by the way included two archbishops, in this council assembled, declared that having read the princess's letter, and

having also examined the documents regarding her accusation by Lady Douglas, were of opinion that the intercourse between her Royal Highness and her daughter should continue to be subject to restrictions and regulations. This was but a fresh stab at her reputation, but it was met in a manner little anticipated; the princess bravely appealed to the nation through parliament, protesting her innocence, condemning a system that dared to pronounce her guilty, without letting her know on what evidence their verdict was founded, and finally requesting Parliament to enter into a full and strict investigation of the Douglas charges, which would again prove her blameless. A letter to the same purport was sent to the Lord Chancellor that it might be read in the House of Lords, which Lord Eldon returned to her, advising her for her own safety not to make it public; to which she replied he need have no apprehension for her, as the British constitution, and the laws of England, were her safeguard. Her letter to the Commons was the cause of more than one warm debate. One member, Mr. Whitebread, called attention to the fact, that though the witnesses who bore evidence

against the princess were 'perjured and blasted,' yet Sir John Douglas was then in the service of one of the royal family. Lord Castlereagh stated that the Government had not prosecuted Sir John and Lady Douglas for perjury, because unwilling to place many indelicate accusations before the world; a statement which was received with sceptical and derisive laughter. Another member, Mr. Wortley, said that he had as high feelings for royalty as any man, but proceedings like this contributed to pull them down. He was sorry that the royal family did not take warning in time from what was thought and said concerning them, and that it seemed they were 'the only persons in the country who were wholly regardless of their welfare and respectability.' The Princess of Wales was doubtlessly ill-used, and he would not have the regent lay the flattering unction to his soul, and think his conduct would bear him harmless through all these transactions. This speech was received with much applause; but after some wrangling, and much bitterness on both sides, the subject was allowed to drop.

The famous publication known as 'The Book,'

which contained the whole statements of the Douglas investigation, copies of which had been bought up at vast prices, was now republished and sold publicly; this added fresh strength to the popular indignation against the regent and his friends. Every mark of public sympathy continued to be shown to the princess; addresses were poured in on her from numerous public bodies, congratulating her on 'having escaped a conspiracy against her life and honour,' in which the city of London took the lead, the borough of Southwark, and the city of Westminster, the county of Middlesex, the towns of Bath, Bristol, Rochester, Sheffield, Berwick-on-Tweed, and Dublin following suit. When the address was carried by the Common Council, one of its members, Sir William Curtis, said publicly that the princess 'had been grossly, infamously, and abominably treated—her innocence was undoubted, her persecution had been shameful;' not satisfied with this honest assertion, he, after the princess's answer to the address, took that opportunity to state that he believed her Royal Highness 'had been traduced most wickedly and most abominably.'

The mob, of course, took up the injured woman's cause, and demonstrated its feelings in its own way. This took the shape of an effigy dressed in white, supposed to represent Lady Douglas, which held in its hand a parasol, on which were written, in letters so large that those who ran might read, the words *Conspiracy and Perjury*, whilst on her back was the inscription, *Diabolical Perjury*. This effigy, attended by an indescribably vast concourse of people, was exhibited in front of Carlton House, that His Royal Highness might have the benefit of the sight, and after being carried through the town, preceded by a bell-ringer announcing the execution at the stake of a certain lady at eight o'clock in the evening at Blackheath, the effigy was burnt amidst tumultuous shouts and great signs of rejoicing.

CHAPTER VI.

The Reign of the Regent—A Levée at Carlton House—Difficulties of his Ministers—Visit of the Foreign Sovereigns to London—The Princess and the Emperor of Russia—At the Opera—The Prince of Orange and the Princess Charlotte—Anxiety of the Regent to get her out of the Kingdom—The Grand Duchess of Oldenburg's Opinion of the Regent—The Princess becomes Rebellious—She breaks off her Marriage—Wrath of the Regent—The Princess's Flight—A Royal Captive.

WHEN time confirmed the opinion of the physicians regarding His Majesty, and his recovery became utterly hopeless, the regent, holding the full powers of state, was now regarded as a king in all but name, whose favour was steadily courted, and whose displeasure was regarded as the greatest misfortune. In order, therefore, that the zealous courtiers might gain the one and avoid the other, they gradually fell off in their attend-

ance on the princess, who at last found herself reduced to the society of a few faithful friends. Meanwhile the prince gave entertainments, famed for their costly magnificence and brilliancy, which were found far more acceptable than the dinners or suppers at Blackheath and Kensington Palace.

Richard Bush, a minister of the United States, gives an account of a levée which somewhat astonished his republican soul. His conveyance having slowly steered its way through an immense crush of coaches and vehicles, he at length gained the great hall of Carlton House, which was lined with the Yeomen of the Guard, having velvet hats adorned with wreaths upon their heads, halberds in their hands, and rosettes ornamenting their shoes; a great stream of courtiers, in handsome and many-coloured costumes, was pushing its way through the spacious apartments, whilst from beyond the open columns of the portico came the mellifluent music of bands. In one of the rooms, awaiting the royal presence, were the cabinet ministers, with bags and swords, the diplomatic corps, the Lord

Steward with his badge of office; the Lord Chamberlain with his; the Lord Chancellor in his black silk gown and wig; the bishops and church dignitaries, with whom the tainted atmosphere of Carlton House by no means disagreed, likewise in wigs; the ambassadors in their national costumes, and many Knights of the Garter. When, presently, the regent came from his closet, doors hitherto shut were thrown wide open, and revealed a vast assembly of brilliant courtiers, who had come to pay their homage at the shrine of royalty, all of whom were honoured by a word, look, or smile from the prince.

The regent was never better pleased than when he was the observed of all observers, holding drawing-rooms, giving fêtes, or presiding at some gorgeous ceremonial; so far as the business of the state was concerned, he was utterly useless, and his conduct frequently perplexed and disgusted his ministers. An example of this was given during the first year of his regency.

At a dance given at Oatlands Park, whilst skipping about in a Highland fling, the prince

wrenched his ankle. 'This took place,' says a correspondent of the Duke of Buckingham's, 'ten days ago, since which he has never been out of his bed. He complained of violent pain and spasmodic affection, for which he prescribed for himself, and took a hundred drops of laudanum every three hours. When Farquhar and the other medical men came down, they saw him under the influence of this laudanum, so enervated and hurt that they immediately prescribed the strongest dose of castor oil; but he still perseveres in his laudanum, which he says relieves him from pain, and lays constantly on his stomach in bed. He will sign nothing, and converse with no one on business, and you may imagine, therefore, the distress and difficulty in which the ministers are placed. The Duke of Cumberland is going about saying it is all a sham, and that he could get up and would be perfectly well if he pleased.'

In June, 1814, the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, with his brother, his sons, and various minor princes, visited London; when the regent had another opportunity of giving

some of those gorgeous fêtes which delighted his royal soul. On this occasion it had been announced that Her Majesty would hold two drawing-rooms in honour of her illustrious guests, at which the young Princess Charlotte would be presented ; the reason for holding two drawing-rooms, it was freely whispered, was in order to allow the princess to appear at one, when her husband would not be present, he in turn attending the other when she would not be there. The princess accordingly, in great glee, prepared for the occasion, but her hopes and intentions were destined to meet with bitter disappointment once more, when she received a message from Her Gracious Majesty that it was impossible to receive her, as she had a communication from the regent, in which he declared he considered his own presence at Court on both occasions indispensable, and ‘his fixed and unalterable determination not to meet the Princess of Wales upon any occasion either public or private.’ To this cruel treatment, intended by her husband to not only humiliate her in the eyes of the nation, but in those of the illustrious sovereigns about to visit England, she was de-

terminated not to submit, but decided to go boldly forward and claim the right of appearing at the drawing-room, due to her station, but was unfortunately dissuaded from this resolution by one of her most zealous friends and advisers, Mr. Whitebread. At his suggestion she wrote to the queen in a submissive tone, asking the cause of this fresh slight put upon her. When another of her friends, Creevey, heard of this counsel of Whitebread's, he said to him, 'You have cut her throat.' Mr., afterward Lord, Brougham, was also of opinion that his advice was wrong; but it was now too late to retrieve the step already taken, and the only thing left for her was to pen a letter to the regent. He might refuse to read it, she said, but the world would know she had written it: she had been declared innocent, and now she would not submit to be declared guilty. 'Of all His Majesty's subjects,' she concluded, 'I alone am prevented by your Royal Highness from appearing in my place, to partake of the general joy; and am deprived of the indulgence in those feelings of pride and affection permitted to every mother but me.'

But this was not the only insult which this occasion was to bring her; before his arrival in England, the Emperor of Russia received a message from the regent, formally delivered by Sir Thomas Tyrwhitt, requesting His Majesty to take no notice of the Princess of Wales. In this manner was she discarded by her husband from every sign of respect lawfully hers, and branded with a crime of which she was innocent, and into which her enemies dared not examine, or yet openly avow. When Their Majesties arrived in town she dispatched her chamberlain to bid them welcome to England, a compliment which they acknowledged by sending their respective chamberlains to wait on her. The King of Prussia—in whose cause her father had fought, and her brother lost his life—sent her his regards, but avowing that, under the circumstances, he dared not come himself; this line of conduct was followed by all the foreign princes who arrived, and even by a nephew of hers, a ‘little vile Prince of Wirtemberg.’

Yet her anxiety that His Imperial Majesty of Russia, whom Napoleon in the day of his power was wont to style a *petit maître*, would visit her

was painful. 'My ears are very ugly,' she said, striving to laugh, whilst yet the tears stood in her eyes, 'but I would give them both to persuade the Emperor to come to me to a ball, a supper, or any entertainment that he would choose.' She waited and hoped until her patience was almost exhausted and her hopes dead, but the great man never came. On one occasion she received a private message from a friend that the emperor intended visiting her, when in great delight she dressed for the occasion and sat patiently with her ladies for four hours expecting him every minute; but, alas! was again doomed to disappointment. Another day her daughter sent her word secretly that it was positively the emperor's intention to visit her, and that he had already sent to intimate his intentions of so doing to the regent, who had not since then spoken to him. Again her hopes were in the ascendant, and no doubt she would have had the honour she so desired, but that, as the emperor was about leaving his apartments to call on her, one of the regent's ministers arrived, and besought him in so forcible a manner not to put his intentions into

execution, that His Imperial Majesty yielded to his entreaties. Still the princess was destined to see Their Majesties before they left England, if not to meet them.

Lady Charlotte Campbell's graphic pen describes the occasion. After dinner 'there came a note from Mr. Whitebread, advising at what hour she should go to the opera, and telling her that the emperor was to be at eleven o'clock at the Institution, which was to be lighted up for him to see the pictures. All this advice tormented the princess, and I do not wonder that she sometimes loses patience. No child was ever more thwarted and controlled than she is—and yet she often contrives to do herself mischief in spite of all the care that is taken of her. When we arrived at the opera, to the princess's and all her attendants' infinite surprise, we saw the regent placed between the Emperor and the King of Prussia, and all the minor princes in a box to the right. "God save the king" was performing when the princess entered, and consequently she did not sit down. I was behind, so of course I could not see the house very distinctly, but I saw the regent was at that time

standing and applauding the Grassinis. As soon as the air was over the whole pit turned round to the princess's box and applauded her. We who were in attendance on her Royal Highness entreated her to rise and make a curtsy, but she sat immoveable, and at last, turning round, she said,

“My dear, Punch's wife is nobody when Punch is present.”

‘We all laughed, but still thought her wrong not to acknowledge the compliment paid her; but she was right, as the sequel will prove.

“We shall be hissed,” said Sir William Gell.

“No, no,” again replied the princess, with infinite good-humour, “I know my business better than to take the morsel out of my husband's mouth; I am not to seem to know that the applause is meant for me until they call my name.”

‘The prince seemed to verify her words, for he got up and bowed to the audience. This was construed into a bow to the princess, most unfortunately; I say most unfortunately, because she has been blamed for not returning it; but I, who was a witness to the circumstance,

know the princess acted just as she ought to have done. The fact was, the prince took the applause to himself; and his friends, or rather his toadies (for they do not deserve the name of friends), to save him from the imputation of this ridiculous vanity, chose to say that he did the most beautiful and elegant thing in the world, and bowed to his wife.

‘ When the opera was finished the prince and his supporters were applauded, but not enthusiastically; and scarcely had his Royal Highness left the box, when the people called for the princess, and gave her a very warm applause. She then went forward and made three curtseys, and hastily withdrew. I believe she acted perfectly right throughout the evening—but everyone tells a different story, and thinks differently. How trivial all this seems, how much beneath the dignity of rational beings. When the coachman attempted to drive home through Charles Street, the crowd of carriages was so immense it was impossible to pass down that street, and with difficulty the princess’s carriage backed, and we returned past Carlton House, where the mob surrounded her carriage,

and having once found out it was her Royal Highness, they applauded and huzzaed until we who were with her were completely stunned. The mob opened the carriage doors, and some of them insisted on shaking hands with her, and asked if they should burn Carlton House.

“No, my good people,” she said, “be quite quiet—let me pass, and go home to your beds.”

‘They would not, however, leave off following her carriage for some way, and cried out,

“Long live the Princess of Wales! long live the innocent, &c. &c.”

‘She was pleased at this demonstration of feeling in her favour, and I never saw her look so well, or behave with so much dignity; yet I hear all this has been misconstrued and various lies told.’

A couple of days after this she was sent word by the box-keeper at Covent Garden, that no box could be kept for her at that theatre; and on the occasion of a common night at Drury Lane, she received word to the same effect from the manager of that play-house, both gentlemen having of course received instructions to this effect from the Court. All these indigni-

ties, petty and galling, inflicted by the first gentleman in Europe on his wife, received public comment, and were bitterly resented by the mob. As he drove through the streets, accompanied by his illustrious visitors, he was hissed, hooted, and groaned at; and on the occasion of his visit to the great dinner given by the Lord Mayor to the foreign monarchs, the immense crowd which lined the way from Temple Bar to the Guildhall, not only groaned and hissed, but shouted out,

‘Where’s your wife? where’s your wife?’

At which delicate inquiry the prince grew livid with rage, and swore a great oath, which, strange to say, he kept, that he would never again honour a civic banquet with his presence.

The Princess of Wales and her daughter were greeted, whenever they drove abroad, in a far different style; instead of hisses they got cheers and words of rough but honest sympathy. To the former was cried out, ‘God bless you, we will make the prince love you before we have done with him,’ ‘You will soon overcome your enemies;’ and to the latter, ‘God bless you, but never forsake your mother.’ These

tokens of popular esteem used to bring tears into the eyes of the outraged wife, who was now weak and nervous from the long struggle for right and justice which she had had to sustain.

Amongst the minor princes who were in London during the visit of His Imperial Majesty and the King of Prussia, were two suitors for the hand of Princess Charlotte. She was at this time in her eighteenth year, and has been described as above the middle height, 'with all the fulness of a person of five-and-twenty, extremely spread for her age, her bosom full but finely shaped, her shoulders large, and her whole person voluptuous; neither graceful nor elegant, yet having a peculiar air *et tous les préstiges de la royauté et du pouvoir.*' Though she had been presented at Court, she was not permitted to join in any of the festivities that filled the town with the fame of their magnificence, but one, at Carlton House; as it was the regent's wish to treat her as a child as long as possible, and keep her out of the sight of the public, who invariably received her with every mark of affection and enthusiasm; a fact proving such a marked contrast to the feelings with

which he was greeted, that his vanity was sorely hurt. She had now a residence in town appropriated to her, a dull old building, quiet as a convent, known as Warwick House, which stood opposite Carlton House, from which it was merely divided by a road. It was arranged that she was to live occasionally at Windsor, where her royal dragon of a grandmother still kept watch over her. No life could be more dull than that of the young princess, who was now seldom permitted to see her mother, forbidden the society of friends of her own age, and continually guarded night and day by the ladies whom the prince had appointed to her household. At the fête at Carlton House, at which she was permitted to be present, her cousin, the Duke of Gloucester, son of the late duke who had married the Countess Waldegrave, was bidden. She had, she confessed, 'found him delightful ; and the duke, who was generally known by no other style than 'Silly Billy,' was wise enough to profit by her regard and elevate himself to the rank of a suitor. During the fête he sat down beside her and talked to her, which much displeased the regent, who

was walking up and down the room with Lady Liverpool, whom he at last sent to request the princess that she would change places with Lady Bathurst, who sat on the other side of her. This the princess would not do, but, with great spirit, stood up and walked into the next room.

Silly Billy was much offended, but the princess subsequently apologised, when he confidentially informed her she might consider him devoted to her, and ready to come forward whenever she cast her eyes on him.

A few days later, it being the regent's birthday, the Queen presented new colours to the Cadet Battalion, at Sandhurst Military College; when the Princess Charlotte was present, as well as all the royal family, the Bishop of Salisbury, the ministers and their wives. The regent did not condescend to speak to, or in any way notice his daughter, giving it as an excuse that 'he could not bear to see those damned ladies' that accompanied her, meaning the Duchess of Leeds and Miss Knight, who behaved with kindness to the almost friendless princess. 'He looked,' says the latter, 'as if he

wished to annihilate us.' The royal family dined in the house, the rest of the company under tents in the garden, and in the evening there was a little dance of five or six couples, promoted by the Duke of Clarence. The day had been remarkably hot, and the evening was a beautiful moonlight. When the Queen was about to depart, the Prince Regent was not to be found, and we afterwards learned that he, with the Duke of York, Prince of Orange, and many others were under the table. The Duke of York hurt his head very seriously against a wine cellaret; in short, it was a sad business.'

Shortly before the visit of the royal sovereigns, the Prince of Orange had arrived in town, and took lodgings over a tailor's shop; his visits to Carlton House were frequent, and it soon became whispered that he was a suitor for the hand of the Princess Charlotte. This princeling was a shallow, frivolous young man, 'particularly plain and sickly in his look, his figure very slender, and his manner rather hearty and boyish.' The regent, partly from political reasons, but principally because he wished to get his daughter out of his way, was

highly favourable to the marriage. He had no affection for her, and had long dreaded the stimulus which her public appearance gave to the almost universal sympathy felt for her mother; moreover, he had carefully avoided everything which could look like a recognition of her as heir presumptive to the crown, hoping that death or divorce might rid him of his wife, and allow him to marry again, when he might have a son, who would, of course, exclude the succession of the daughter of his abhorred spouse.

The queen too was likewise anxious to get her out of the country, having a deadly fear of her growing popularity, and had eagerly seconded the regent in his plans for her seclusion, knowing that if the princess assumed her rightful place, the cold austerity and somewhat ridiculous etiquette dear to the German heart of Her Majesty, must fall into disuse. The princess's marriage with His Highness of Orange would, it was believed, necessitate her leaving the kingdom, and the regent therefore resolved that their union must take place; he had no doubt that she would obey his royal will, and the means he adopted of gaining her

consent were singularly free from subtlety. She was invited to dine at Carlton House, to meet the man selected as her future husband.

Previous to the dinner the regent took them into a room, when they walked up and down together for some time ; after which he drew her aside, and abruptly said, ' Well, it will not do, I suppose ? ' to which she answered, ' I do not say that. I like his manner very well, as much as I have seen of it. ' The regent could not conceal his joy at this, and immediately joined their hands together. But the course of their royal love did not run quite so smoothly as the regent desired : it happened next morning that the Prince of Wales and his son-in-law elect called to visit the princess at Warwick House, and whilst the regent was talking to Miss Knight, they suddenly heard Her Royal Highness break into a violent fit of sobs and hysterical tears ; at which the royal parent looked very much frightened, and rushed into the next room to find His Highness of Orange looking much disturbed and his daughter in great distress. ' What ! is he taking his leave ? ' said the regent, to which she answered with a sigh, ' Not yet. '

The cause of the disturbance was that the Prince of Orange told her that when they were married, she should reside in Holland part of each year, and even, when necessary, follow him to the army; that he wished her to go to Berlin and travel in Germany, and that she could invite over what friends she liked. He thought it better to tell her all this, and be open and fair; though the regent wished him not to mention it. She had not before suspected that this marriage was pushed forward to get rid of her, but now she began to suspect the fact, and to resent it; and, moreover, to dread the idea of leaving her mother in the critical position in which she was then placed; however, she then made no effort to break off the intended marriage, and the regent considering it as settled, the Prince of Orange left England.

The subject was allowed to drop for a few months, during which time the Grand Duchess of Oldenburg, sister to the Emperor of Russia, arrived in town. This lady was a widow and an *intrigante*, who carried a certain agreeable Prince Gagarin in her train. She was graciously

received by Her Sacred Majesty and the court, and the Princess Charlotte was charmed with her when they met. In the course of a visit which the young princess paid her, the duchess, among other things, complained sorely of 'the assiduities of the Duke of Clarence, of his vulgar familiarity, and of his want of delicacy;' she also informed the princess that her father was '*un voluptueux*;' and in return her Royal Highness informed her that many persons had supposed she was to marry the regent if he could have found cause for a divorce: to which the Grand Duchess replied, that though she would have done anything to oblige her brother the emperor, now that she had seen the prince, she could never think of marrying him.

It was supposed that the duchess was not favourable to the Orange alliance, and that her views concerning it but served to make the princess more discontented than she had yet been with her future lot. Soon a formal petition was sent for her hand from the sovereign of the Netherlands, on behalf of his son, the Prince of Orange, and a marriage contract was speedily drawn up by the ministers, at the

urgent request of the regent. If she had before suspected, she was now convinced that her marriage was but a pretext for exiling her.

‘I have now no manner of doubt,’ she wrote to a friend, ‘that it is decidedly *an object and wish of more than one* to get rid of me, if possible, in this way. You are far too sensible not to know that this marriage is only *de convenance*, and that it is as much brought about by force as anything, and by deceit and hurry. I am much more *triste* at it than I have ever chosen to write—can you be surprised?—a twenty-four hours acquaintance, too, really, and where, and how?’

She had been forbidden to communicate the news to her mother, but she managed to write and tell her, and, when she was allowed to see her, spoke of her personal feelings towards her future husband. According to Lady Charlotte Campbell, she said to her mother that she was determined not to marry him; that ‘his being approved of by the royal family was quite sufficient to make him disapproved of by her; for that she would marry a man who would be at her devotion, not at theirs.’

‘Marry I will,’ she said to the Princess of Wales, ‘and that directly, in order to enjoy my liberty; but not the Prince of Orange. I think him so ugly that I am sometimes obliged to turn my head away in disgust when he is speaking to me.’

‘But, my dear,’ replied her mother, ‘whoever you marry will become a king, and you will give him a power over you.’

‘A king! Pho, pho! never! He will only be my first subject—never my king.’

The seclusion and coercion which her father intended should keep her in a childish state, and render her submissive to his will, had the unforeseen effect of ripening her faculties, sharpening her observation, and strengthening her self-dependence; and these qualities now coming to her aid, she declared she would never consent to leave the nation, unless by an Act of Parliament, and that her marriage should be broken off. The regent was furious to have his desires balked, but was powerless in the face of the country to compel her to his wishes; knowing that contradiction would be useless, he resolved to try strategy, and secretly sent

for the Prince of Orange, who quickly arrived in England, and duly presented himself at Warwick House, under the feigned name of Captain St. George. The princess, being unwell, and not yet up, sent one of her ladies to see the unknown captain, and was surprised to find His Highness of Orange.

After a while, the princess consented to see him, said she had no complaint to make against him, but that she would not leave the kingdom. She had asked to see the marriage contract, as she had heard it made no provision for a house or settlement for her in England; which she considered was tantamount to an agreement that she was to reside abroad; but her request had the effect of sending the regent into a fresh rage. He declared he had no intention of banishing her from the kingdom, but he, who was so well versed in the duties of wives to their husbands, informed her every woman should follow her husband. She had no business, he said, to see her contract, but he told her it contained a settlement of £50,000 on her, that one clause stated her eldest son was to be the future king of England, that he would be

taken from her at the age of four, in order that he might be educated in this country, and that her second son should be King of Holland. She determined not to be so easily disposed of, and, after receiving this message quietly, turned to read Burnet regarding the provisions made by the peers to prevent Queen Mary from being taken out of England by Philip of Spain, and then addressed a letter to her uncle, the Duke of York, on the subject. He came next day to expostulate with his niece, who declined the honour of seeing His Royal Highness. He then sent her word by one of her ladies that she laboured under a great mistake in considering herself heir-apparent, whereas she could hardly be considered heir-presumptive.

The Prince of Orange wrote to inform his father of the princess's determination not to leave the kingdom ; and that wise man, who was loath to let such an alliance slip, agreed to her demands, that she should not leave the country without the joint consent of the regent and herself, which limited her power to go abroad and left her power to remain in England uncontrolled. The regent in vain endeavoured

to prevail on her to retract these stipulations, on the plea of giving offence to the Orange family, but she remained firm. He was then anxious the marriage should take place at once, and the queen bought the wedding garments; these included but one court dress, which her economical Majesty considered sufficient, 'as hoop-petticoats were not worn in Holland.'

About this time the foreign sovereigns visited England, and in their train came a youthful prince, who was not long in gaining the princess's notice: this was Leopold, third son of the Prince of Coburg, who was in the service of the Russian emperor, and who, during his visit, lodged over a grocery shop, in High Street, Marylebone Road. This prince was gifted by nature with good looks, and was pronounced to be the possessor of an elegant form. He had boldly introduced himself to the Princess Charlotte by bringing her a letter from some German cousin a hundred times removed, of whose existence she had probably never heard before. This incident led her to the knowledge that the prince's manners were agreeable, and she sought to improve his acquaintance; but, alas! as she

was not permitted to be present at any of the fêtes, little opportunity for this offered itself; however, rather than run the risk of never meeting him again, she asked him to tea, to partake of which refreshing beverage the wily youth frequently presented himself at Warwick House. By the time he took his departure he had contrived to leave a very favourable impression on her mind.

The Prince of Orange was, of course, in town during the visit of the illustrious sovereigns, but did not seem to prosper in the good graces of his bride elect : the more she saw of him the less she liked him, and the more she felt convinced that a man with such little depths of thought or feeling was not calculated to be a guide for her in the stormy path which she would probably have to tread. This fact, however, did not seem to disturb him ; he amused himself vastly by attending balls, races, and fêtes, nor was his enjoyment seemingly lessened by the fact that she was not present at these entertainments to amuse herself likewise ; occasionally, too, he drank more than was at all good for him, in which condition he presented himself

before her, and behaved in a manner which may be described as rowdy. One day, the princess informed him that one of her reasons for wishing to remain in England was on account of her mother ; that on having a house of her own, it must be opened equally to both her parents ; and that she, as their daughter, must ignore all difference between them. His Orange Highness, who feared the regent, demurred, and said the motives urged by her for stopping in England were to him arguments for getting away from disagreeable complications, and that if she refused to go abroad with him, their respective duties were irreconcilable and their marriage impossible.

After this, some common-place disagreement ensued : the princess asked him to go with her to the riding-house, he refused ; she persisted and reproached him for his incivility, when he, in a fit of anger, left her, but not before she told him she would never consent to become his wife. She followed up this statement by a letter, in which she said she was fully convinced that her interest was materially connected with that of her mother, and that her residence out

of the country would be equally prejudicial to her interest and that of the Princess of Wales. 'After what has passed upon this subject this morning between us,' she continued, 'I must consider our engagement from this moment to be totally and for ever at an end.' He heeded her letter but little, and at a ball which he attended at Hertford House on the evening of its reception, he spoke of her tantrums, but looked surprised when he was told they were no laughing matter. He took two days to consider the subject before replying; and he concluded the note he then wrote her by 'hoping you will never repent of this step;' she only laughed at his letter for the specimens of bad English which it contained.

Before leaving, the Emperor of Russia paid the princess several visits, waxed eloquent over the virtues and qualities of his Orange Highness, and strongly advocated her marrying him, which from political motives would have been agreeable to his Imperial Majesty; but these entreaties having no effect, he had a private interview with her just before his departure, when he used all his endeavours to change her mind, and prevail

on her to see the Prince of Orange, who was then waiting for the purpose in her house, without her knowledge; but this she stoutly refused, and declared over and over again she would have nothing to say to him. At this time she was suffering severely from a hurt she had received in her knee, which caused her pain by day, and restlessness by night, and thus, with the mental agitation she had undergone concerning her marriage, made her ill. Three doctors who attended her recommended her to the sea-side, but her affectionate father, who now refused to see or speak to her, would not consent to her leaving town. 'I am grown thin, sleep ill, and eat but little,' she writes to one of her friends, at this time. 'Dr. Baily says my complaints are all nervous, and that bathing and sailing will brace me; but I say, oh no; no good can be done whilst the mind and soul are on the rack constantly, and the spirits forced and screwed up to a certain pitch. I always think six months got over of this dreadful life I lead, six months gained; but when the time comes for moving from place to place, I do it with reluctance, from never

knowing my lot, or what next may befall me.'

The regent, having had his plans thwarted and his royal will set aside by one whom he had treated as a child, strove to revenge himself on her with all the pettiness of his vindictive nature. The Bishop of Salisbury was sent to her with threats, that if she did not hold out a hope of marrying the Prince of Orange, certain arrangements would be made regarding her by no means agreeable to her inclinations. She replied she could give no such hope: she was then sent for to Carlton House, but was too ill to go and despatched Miss Knight with an excuse. This lady found the regent 'very cold, very bitter, very silent.' Next evening, accompanied by his Grace of Salisbury, the prince called on his daughter, still looking black with anger, and remained shut up with her for three quarters of an hour alone; then his spiritual lordship was called in, and the conference was continued for some time longer; after which the door opened, and the princess came out, trembling, agitated, and in the greatest agony. Her father had revealed to her his plans for her future; all her

ladies and members of the household were to be instantly dismissed, and new companions selected by the prince were already in the house, who were to guard and watch her in the future. She was to leave Warwick House that night, and after five days confinement in Carlton House, she was to be taken to Cranbourn Lodge, in the midst of Windsor Forest, where she was to be allowed to see no one but the Queen once a week.

After telling this to Miss Knight, she fell on her knees and cried out in great agitation, 'God Almighty grant me patience.' Miss Knight was then sent for by the prince, who dismissed her, saying, in a surly tone by way of apology, that he had a right to make any changes he pleased ; that he was sorry to put a lady to inconvenience, but that he wanted her room that night for the ladies who were to attend the princess ; that if she had nowhere to go, there was a room at Carlton House which she might have for a night or two ; to which she replied with some spirit, that her father having served His Majesty for fifty years, and sacrificed his health and fortune in that service,

it would be very strange if she could not put herself to the temporary inconvenience of a few hours. When she left his august presence, she found that the princess, overcome with distress and perplexity, had rushed out of the house before anyone could stop her, and had gone to her mother.

The fact was, that when Miss Knight left her, the princess had put on her bonnet, slipped out of the house, stepped into the first hackney coach she could find, and putting a guinea into the driver's hand, desired to be taken to Connaught House, where her mother then resided. Arrived here, she found the Princess of Wales had gone to Blackheath, when she sent for her immediately, as also for her friend Miss Mercer : then flinging herself down on a couch, she cried out in a passionate burst of tears, 'I would rather earn my own bread and live on five shillings a week, than lead the life I do.' Meanwhile the Princess of Wales, accompanied by Lady Charlotte Lindsay, arrived in town in great haste, and drove at once to the House of Parliament, where she asked to see Mr. Whitebread ; he was not present, and she then in-

quired for Earl Grey, who was likewise absent ; she then drove home and sent for Mr. Brougham. The princess did not receive her daughter with the sympathy and affection which the latter had expected ; for her Royal Highness was at that time meditating a journey abroad, and feared that any annoyance to the regent might prevent him from granting her desires ; the Princess Charlotte felt this bitterly, and from that time never regarded her with the same feelings as before. When Mr. Brougham arrived, the young princess rushed forward, and taking him by both hands, told him of the treatment with which her father threatened her, and of the proposed marriage, the thought of which had now grown abhorrent. He told her that, without her consent, it could not take place ; to which she replied, 'They may wear me out by ill-treatment, and may represent that I have changed my mind and consented.' Mr. Brougham sent for the Duke of Sussex, for whom of all her uncles the princess cared most, and he arrived presently.

The regent had in the meantime sent for his ministers, and informed them of his daughter's

flight, carefully concealing from them the part which he had acted ; and after a short council, Lord Chancellor Eldon, the Bishop of Salisbury, Lord Ellenborough, Leach, and finally the Duke of York, were dispatched to convey her to Carlton House. They arrived one after another in hackney coaches, and all of them but Lord Eldon were shown into the drawing-room downstairs, his lordship being, at the request of the Princess Charlotte, who detested him, allowed to remain in his hackney coach. In an upper drawing-room the two princesses and their friends held council ; the mother besought her daughter to return to Carlton House, but the princess would not consent, she sobbed and cried bitterly and refused to return. Mr. Brougham then assured her that the regent would have a habeas corpus issued to force her away, which indeed he had already done ; at which she became still more affected. ' I have told many a client,' writes Lord Brougham, ' he was going to be convicted, but I never saw anything like her stupefaction : for a quarter of an hour she was lost.'

At last she wrote to her father, offering to return if she might retain one of her ladies, Miss

Knight, and her maid. The Bishop undertook to deliver this communication, and presently returned with word that nothing but unconditional surrender would satisfy the regent. She then appealed to Mr. Brougham for advice, to which he replied, 'Return to Warwick House or Carlton House, and on no account pass a night out of your own house.'

'She was extremely affected, and cried,' he writes in his interesting *Life and Times*; 'asking if I too refused to stand by her; I said quite the contrary, and that as to the marriage I gave no opinion, except that she must follow her own inclination entirely, but that her returning home was absolutely necessary; and in this all the rest fully agreed—her mother, the Duke of Sussex, Miss Mercer, and Lady Charlotte Lindsay, for whom she had a great respect and regard. I said that, however painful it was for me, the necessity was so clear and so strong that I had not the least hesitation in advising it. She again and again begged me to consider her situation, and to think whether, looking to that, it was absolutely necessary she should return. The day now began to dawn, and I took

her to the window. The election of Cochrane was to take place that day. I said, "Look there, madam : in a few hours all the streets and the park, now empty, will be crowded with tens of thousands. I have only to take you to that window, and show you to the multitude, and tell them your grievances, and they will all rise in your behalf."

"And why should they not?" I think she said, or some such words.

"The commotion," I answered, "will be excessive: Carlton House will be attacked—perhaps pulled down, the soldiers will be ordered out, blood will be shed; and, if your Royal Highness were to live a hundred years, it never would be forgotten that your running away from your father's house was the cause of the mischief; and, you may depend upon it, such is the English people's horror of bloodshed, you never would get over it."

'She at once felt the truth of my assertion, and consented to see her uncle Frederick (Duke of York) below stairs, and return with him. But she required one of the royal carriages should be sent for, which came with her gover-

ness, and they, with the Duke of York, went home about five o'clock.

'Before she went, however, she desired me to make a minute of her declaration that she was resolved not to marry the Prince of Orange, and that, if ever there should be an announcement of such a match, it must be understood to be without her consent and against her will. She added, "I desire Augustus (Duke of Sussex) and Mr. Brougham would particularly take notice of this." When I had made the note, it was read distinctly and signed by all present, she signing first, and six copies were made and signed, and one given to each person present. Her positive injunction was that, if ever we heard the match announced as being to proceed, we should make her declaration in the note public.'

When she arrived at Carlton House, she was obliged to remain for half an hour in the coach-yard while it was debated how she should be received. Next day Miss Knight called but was not admitted beyond the gate of Carlton House, and in a few days after she was removed to Cranbourn Lodge. Here, during the first week

of her captivity, she managed to steal a piece of paper, and with a pencil wrote a note, which was secretly conveyed to Miss Knight, to be forwarded by her to the Duke of Sussex. 'His Royal Highness,' wrote that lady, 'read it to me, and it contained a melancholy description of the manner in which she was confined and watched night and day.'

Four days after the princess's flight, the *Morning Chronicle* published a detailed account of the matter, and of the restrictions with which she had been threatened, and great was the public wrath once more stirred up against the regent; the press teemed with comments by no means favourable on his conduct, lampoons swarmed, and his treatment of his daughter became the universal topic.

The Duke of Sussex wrote to the Prime Minister asking permission to see his niece, and received in return a brief reply: 'The regent has read the letter, and has no commands. After this he took an early opportunity of asking Lord Liverpool, in the House of Lords, several pertinent questions. He wished to be informed whether the Princess Charlotte 'is,

since her residence at Carlton House, in that state of liberty which persons considered not as in confinement ought to be in? whether she has had the liberty of that communication in writing and by letter—of receiving and sending letters—and the use of pens, ink, and paper that she had whilst at Warwick House? whether she was not recommended, as proper for her health, the use of the sea-bath? and whether, having arrived at the age of eighteen years and a half—past the period when Parliament has frequently recognised the capacity of persons of the royal family to assume the government of the country without assistance—whether there is any intention of providing an establishment suitable for Her Royal Highness, and proper for her to live and appear according to her due rank in that society over which it will be her lot one day to reign?’ After an awkward pause Lord Liverpool replied at some length, that ‘the Prince Regent had his daughter’s benefit, interest, and advantage in view in his conduct towards her.’

The prince was so indignant at these questions asked by the Duke of Sussex, that he never

forgave him. He assembled all his family, and told them they must choose between him and the duke; all of them declared in favour of the regent, except the Duke of Gloucester, who stoutly refused to give up the friendship of the Duke of Sussex. This latter duke became so alarmed at these proceedings that he found himself suddenly attacked by asthma, which was so severe as to prevent him taking any further steps in his niece's behalf, and she was therefore abandoned to her fate.

The regent, however, was somewhat in fear of the public storm, and the princess was sent to Weymouth under a strong guard of ladies, whose watch never relaxed; after this visit she was conducted back again to the dreary seclusion of Cranbourn Lodge, where she was kept till her subsequent marriage. Her Majesty all this while was guiltless of all friendly interference on behalf of her granddaughter; and this the public resented. On her going to St. James's in a sedan-chair to hold a drawing-room, a great crowd gathered round her, and, with menacing looks, demanded, 'What have you done with the princess?' 'Where's your

granddaughter?' Then followed a sharp shower of hisses, and according to Lord Grey, 'there was no form of reproach that did not assail her ears.'

CHAPTER VII.

The Princess of Wales Determines to leave England—The Opinion of her Friends—The Regent Rejoices—Her Departure—The Princess Charlotte's Marriage—Prince Leopold and the Mob—The Marriage Ceremony—Brief Illness and Death—Sorrow of the Nation—Indignations against the Queen and Prince—Marriages of the Royal Dukes—Death of the Queen—The last Days of the King—His Death.

THE Princess of Wales, worn out by humiliations, petty persecutions, and trials, resolved to leave England and travel on the Continent for some time. This plan was opposed by most of her friends, and especially by Mr. Brougham, who told her that as long as she stayed in this country he would answer that no plot could succeed against her, but living abroad she would be surrounded by spies and tools of her enemies, ready to swear or invent as they were directed. 'In England,' he wrote to her,

‘spies and false witnesses can do nothing; abroad everything may be apprehended from them. Depend upon it, madame, there are many persons who now begin to see a chance of divorcing you from the prince.’

But the princess would not listen to his advice; she was exhausted by constant agitation and fears, and weary of a country in which she never had one day’s happiness; she therefore drew up a letter to Lord Liverpool, informing him of her desire to go abroad, and inquiring if there would be any opposition on the part of the ministry to her fulfilling her intentions; to which his lordship, by order of the regent, declared there was none. This unusual accession to his request, together with the promptness and civility of the answer, should have been sufficient to make her suspicious of the wisdom of her scheme. Whether it had this effect or not, she at once prepared for her journey, and wished to make over her house at Blackheath to her daughter. When this desire was made known to the regent, he caused her to be informed that the Princess Caroline would never be permitted to reside in a house which had

once been occupied by the Princess of Wales.

Before leaving England, the government made her a grant of £50,000 a year, which was a boon to one who had frequently been in debt and in many pecuniary difficulties, to redeem herself from which she had been obliged to sell her plate, and occasionally some of her jewels. 'I have found a pair of old earrings,' she once wrote to a friend of hers, 'which the devil of a queen once gifted me with. I truly believed that the sapphires *ar fals* as her *heart* and soul is, but the diamonds are good, and £50 or £80 would be very acceptable for them indeed.' Though she had made up her mind to leave England, yet she was not aware of the danger she was about to risk ; and, before starting, she wrote to Canning that if any machinations were going on against her, were it only a whisper, she would quickly return and defend her innocence. This letter was shown to the regent, who, to throw her off her guard, falsely declared no such thing was intended. His royal soul was now almost overpowered with joy at the prospect of getting rid of his wife ; and, in order to celebrate her departure, he entertained some

choice spirits at dinner, after which, being probably drunk at the time, he gave the toast, ‘To the Princess of Wales, damnation, and may she never return to England.’

The princess, being prepared for her journey, went to Worthing, where she was to embark, and where she was permitted to have a brief interview with her daughter, whom she was destined never again to see in this world. Her spirits on the eve of this journey, to which she had looked forward with much expectation, became miserably depressed and gloomy, and she would sit for hours at night on the beach looking out at sea, silent and thoughtful, as if filled with melancholy presentiments.

‘Ah, well,’ she said once, starting from one of these reveries, ‘grief is unavailing when fate compels me.’

Her suite consisted of Lady Charlotte Lindsey, Lady Elizabeth Forbes, Sir William Gell, Dr. (afterwards Sir Henry) Holland, and Mr. St. Leger, besides their attendants. On the morning of August 9, 1814, she drove to the Worthing beach, dressed in ‘a dark cloth pelisse, with large gold clasps, and a cap of velvet

and green satin, of the Prussian hussar costume, with a green feather.' It had been her intention to embark from here, but so great was the crowd, which increased every moment, that she withdrew as quickly as possible to South Lancing, about two miles further off, where a boat destined to convey her to the frigate in which she was to sail proceeded to meet her. Her purpose, however, was noticed, and she was followed the whole way by an enormous crowd in carriages and on foot, which was anxious to show her their sympathy and respect.

The departure of this much-injured woman, who may be said to have been driven from the country by the relentless persecution of one whose duty it was to protect her, was not without a touch of pathos. Tears stood in her eyes as she got into the barge amidst the respectful silence of the vast throng; she could not venture to speak, but turning round to the people, she kissed her hands to them in mute farewell; immediately every man uncovered, and the women waved their handkerchiefs; while the princess was so overcome that she fainted.

Shortly after her mother's departure, the Princess Charlotte was removed to Warwick House, the entrance to which by the road was secured by iron bars on the inside, so that all who entered or left this prison were obliged to pass through the courtyard of Carlton House. Moreover, the regent gave a list of those whom she was permitted to see; and to show the public that she was not quite such a prisoner as vile rumour hinted, she was allowed to go to the opera or play once a week, guarded by her ladies, on the understanding that she left the theatre before the performance concluded, and that she in no way courted popularity. But the nation was not forgetful of her existence, and it became plain to her royal father that he could not much longer keep her in *durance vile*; he was therefore resolved to get her married as soon as possible, as otherwise the opposition might clamour for her being treated as heir-apparent to the throne, which he was most anxious to avoid. So determined, indeed, was he that no honours should be paid her that on one of her birthdays, when the good citizens prepared to illuminate at night,

he sent word to have such proceedings stopped, and the anniversary was passed over in silence.

Having made up his mind to get her married as soon as possible, the regent bethought himself of Prince Leopold, who had, before leaving England with the Russian emperor, offered himself to the prince as a suitor for his daughter's hand, and been promptly rejected. He was now sent for, and the princess was summoned to accompany the queen to Brighton, where, to her surprise and joy, His Serene Highness was presented to her as the man selected for her future husband. Prince Leopold enjoyed the not too extravagant income of two hundred a year, which those who spoke irreverent things of royalty said was just sufficient to buy him two coats and a dozen shirts ; but he was now about being raised to a position in which he could afford to buy himself a complete wardrobe. The sum of £60,000 a year was settled on the young couple, out of which the princess was to have the sole and separate use of £10,000 ; they were also granted the round sum of £60,000 to purchase an outfit, £10,000

of which was to be laid out on clothes, and an equal sum on jewels.

When His Serene Highness of Coburg came to London as the accepted suitor of Princess Charlotte, he forsook his old lodgings over the grocery shop in High Street, and hired a bedroom at Jacquin's Hotel in Bond Street, which, at the regent's request, he subsequently quitted for Clarence House, where all the necessaries of life were supplied to His Serene Highness from Carlton House.

The wedding was fixed for May 2, 1816. Such an event caused much interest, curiosity and excitement ; and the eagerness of the people was so great to see the young foreigner who was about to become the husband of one whom they regarded as their future queen, that crowds assembled round Clarence House the whole of the forenoon of the wedding-day, between whom and the prince an understanding was soon established. As soon as a sufficiently large number had gathered, they clapped hands, on which signal the Prince of Coburg, habited in a blue coat, buff waistcoat, and grey pantaloons, came for-

ward on the balcony and bowed repeatedly like a mechanical toy. The crowd then went its way, busy with many conjectures and comments, and in another quarter of an hour a fresh concourse of people had collected and the same performance was gone through. 'His ready and cheerful exhibition of himself,' says one of the newspapers of the day, 'seemed to diffuse the highest satisfaction among the spectators, and excited, long before the close of the day, a cordial familiarity.'

On the evening of May 2, the queen, the regent, and Prince Leopold gave dinner parties at their respective residences, after which all assembled at Carlton House, in one of the apartments of which, known as the Great Crimson Room, the marriage service was to take place. Here in due time gathered the queen, looking now somewhat shrunken, old, and careworn, but as rigidly ceremonious as ever, accompanied by the princesses, blonde and buxom, and the regent, whose corpulency was rapidly increasing to unbecoming dimensions, and whose face had a deep rich hue, not altogether attained by exposure to weather. The royal

dukes were likewise present, as were two archbishops and an equal number of bishops, and many peers and peeresses, and ministers of high estate. The apartment was lit up with an exceeding great number of wax lights, and the whole scene was brilliant to behold.

The regent, with hearty good-will, gave the bride away to her future lord and master, who rejoiced to take her, and the Archbishop of Canterbury performed the ceremony ; at the conclusion of which, at twenty minutes past nine of the clock, the guns in the tower of St. James's announced to the eager crowds that had gathered in the streets that these two had been made one till death did them part. Illuminations and many demonstrations of joy followed. The bride and bridegroom then retired to change their dresses, after which Her Royal Highness, without waiting to receive the congratulations of the illustrious company, quietly slipped down the private stairs from the state apartments to the ground-floor, and entered the carriage waiting for her in the garden, when she and her new-made husband drove to Oatlands to spend the honeymoon. They

afterwards took a house in Park Lane, and finally bought Claremont, where most of the princess's brief but happy married life was spent.

The existence she now led was as blissful as could be, and simple. Prince Leopold proved wise, cautious, and affectionate; and she, whose days had heretofore been spent in misery and restraint, became one of the happiest subjects in the kingdom.

'We lead a very quiet and retired life here,' she writes from Claremont, a few months after her marriage, 'but a very, very happy one!' Unfortunately these halcyon days were destined to be of short duration. Early in November of the year following her marriage, the nation looked forward to her accouchement with keen interest, and it was hoped that the birth of an heir would increase her store of gladness. On the fourth of this month the great officers of state were summoned that they might be present at the expected event; and Sir Richard Croft, a fashionable, but not very skilful accoucheur, and Mrs. Griffiths, a lady who had never been a mother, but who, through interest, was now

appointed nurse, were sent for likewise. At so momentous a time as this to the princess, it was strange and sad that she was completely deserted by her family, and that not a matron was to be found in her household. The regent was spending his days in the company of the Marchioness of Hertford, at Ragley Hall in Suffolk, whilst the queen and the princesses were at Bath. According to Huish, Her Majesty had offered to remain in town for this critical occasion; but 'the offer was indignantly rejected by the Princess Charlotte, who declared she would not have any of her enemies about her.'

The princess's labour commenced on the night of November 4, and lasted forty-eight hours, during which time Sir Richard Croft did not think well of sending for a second medical man until fatal symptoms appeared. Sir Richard, indeed, was tenacious of his professional dignity, and had said to Baron Stockmar, a member of the household, who had ventured to give it as his opinion that the princess was sinking, 'Are you or I, sir, in authority here?' At nine o'clock on the evening of the 5th she was delivered of a stillborn child, and five

hours afterwards died in her husband's arms, November 6, 1817.

The sudden and melancholy shock of her death was felt throughout the length and breadth of the country, and was regarded as one of the most disastrous events that had ever befallen the nation. With hope and confidence the people had looked forward to her reign over them, and their grief and disappointment at her death were bitter and deep. A universal mourning was at once adopted by all classes; theatres, operas, and all places of amusement voluntarily closed; marriages and private entertainments were postponed; business was deferred; the churches were hung with black; and signs of earnest sorrow were visible throughout the land.

When the news reached the regent, he hastened to town, and declared himself so ill from grief that he wished to have his favourite operation of bleeding performed. He then went to Windsor, where the queen had returned, then journeyed back again to town, and after a few days his sorrow was sufficiently abated to permit him to visit the Pagoda at Brighton,

where, according to the press, 'he had resolved to indulge his melancholy for a short time.' He became so much better, surrounded by a society that had always fresh charms for his soul, that the *Morning Chronicle* was enabled to inform its readers 'all apprehensions relative to his health had subsided;' he did not, however, return to town until after the funeral. Intelligence of the sad event was conveyed to the Princess of Wales by Prince Leopold's equerry, for even on such an occasion as this, the regent had resolved to ignore the existence of his wife; the unhappy woman fainted when the news was broken to her.

'She is gone before,' she said, 'and I trust we shall soon meet in a better world than the present one.'

When the first outburst of national grief had subsided, the most violent indignation was felt against the queen and the regent. The cruelties practised by the latter on his daughter but a few months ago were remembered, and the fact that no male or female member of the royal family were present during the princess's illness was commented on with scathing severity.

It was asserted on excellent authority that, humanly speaking, her life could have been saved, or, in other words, that she died through wilful neglect. The share of public odium which fell on Sir Richard Croft was so great, and made such an impression on a mind more sensitive than his superiors, that he soon afterwards committed suicide. Strange to say, this incident, instead of disarming public censure, but served to excite amongst the people some wild and terrible suspicions which had gradually been gaining ground, that the princess had been unfairly dealt with; and Sir Richard's death by his own hands was regarded as the result of remorse. It was likewise noted that Mrs. Griffiths, the nurse, whose name had been previously mixed up with Sir Richard's in an unpleasant manner, and who was never a suitable person for the responsible post she held towards the princess, mysteriously disappeared. These dark surmises gained such ground that the press and public demanded a searching inquiry into the circumstances of Her Royal Highness's illness.

'The cry for an investigation of the circum-

stances attending the mortal accouchement of the late Princess Charlotte,' says the *Morning Chronicle*, 'becomes day by day more audible. It is the topic of every assembly, and we lament to see it inflamed by the writings of medical men. We have numerous letters on the subject, which we have suppressed from a conviction of the inutility of such a retrospect.'

When Huish was compiling the *Memoirs of George IV.*, he tells us he repeatedly visited Esher, the town near Claremont House, for the purpose of obtaining information regarding the Princess Charlotte. He says, 'There was scarcely an inhabitant of the town who did not shake the head, with all the expression of suspicion, whenever the princess's death was mentioned; and,' adds this historian, 'there is a corroding belief yet existing in many minds, that there is some mystery still to be revealed, and that the fairest flower of Brunswick's royal line would, in other hands, have lived to perpetuate their destiny, and to be a blessing to the country of her birth.' No investigation regarding the princess's illness was ever made.

This public grief, according to Earl Grey,

was 'annoying to the prince,' but he was powerless to set it aside. The abuse heaped on him by the press was only equalled by that preached in the pulpit, which was dealt out to him without stint by such unworldly men as had no aspirations towards lawn sleeves. Indeed, one celebrated preacher at Cheltenham went so far as to dwell on a verse in Jeremiah, which says, 'He shall not reign nor any of his seed,' words which were applied to the regent, of whom it was devoutly hoped they might prove prophetic. Never perhaps was the unpopularity of any king or prince so great; he was loathed by the nation, and censured for his extravagance at a time when the country was depressed, bread scarce, taxes high, and the public ready for an outbreak at any favourable moment. The people occasionally gave vent to their feelings by writing on the walls of Carlton House, 'Bread or the Regent's Head,' and on one occasion they left a loaf steeped in blood on the parapet in front of the building.

The spirit of disloyalty went a step further, and, on his return from opening Parliament in 1817, he was fired at from the crowd that had

various Courts to select their respective wives. They evidently fell in love at first sight with the ladies destined to become their spouses, for their choice was made in remarkably quick time, and the nation was called on to provide them with additional incomes in order to maintain establishments suitable to their new position as the husbands of Serene Princesses, scandalously stigmatized by the press as 'German paupers, one more ugly than another.'

Not many months had elapsed after the death of the Princess Charlotte when it was announced that the Queen was dying—an event which was regarded neither by her own family, nor by the nation at large, as a calamity. During her most serious illness the regent enjoyed himself as usual, and not many weeks before her death he entertained the foreign ambassadors at his Court at dinner, after which, being in a merry mood, he diverted the ministerial gravity by singing them some jovial songs. Her Majesty had been suffering for about ten months from spasmodic attacks and dropsy, and, finally, mortification setting in, her imminent danger became obvious to all but herself. It was well known that Her

Majesty possessed a goodly share of personal property, and it was also a recognised fact that, notwithstanding their frequent quarrels, the Prince of Wales was her favourite child. The prince was well aware of this, and took pains to ascertain that she had made no will. He therefore caused her to be informed 'that if Her Majesty had any affairs to settle, it would be advisable to do so whilst she had health and spirits to bear the fatigue.' The poor queen was startled, but she took the hint, and made a will in which she never mentioned his name. Her personal property was, after her death, sworn to as being under £140,000; the greater part of which lay in the jewels for which she had always had a passion. Those given her by the king on her marriage, valued at £50,000, and paid for by the nation, she bequeathed to the crown of Hanover as an heirloom; the magnificent jewels presented her by the Nabob of Arcot, together with those which she had bought from time to time and had received as presents, she ordered to be sold, and to have the proceeds thereof divided amongst four of her daughters — the remaining daughter, the Queen of Wur-

temburg, with whom Her Majesty had had a misunderstanding, was not to derive any advantage from the sale. The diamonds were valued at almost a million. The remainder of her property was likewise divided between these four daughters, no mention being made of her sons, or those who had served her, with the exception of one German woman, Madame Beckendorff, to whom she left her wardrobe, said to be the finest in Europe. There was another item in this royal will which caused much amusement at the time. Her Majesty had made a careful list of such articles of faded finery as she had brought with her when she came as a bride to England, and for which by the way the country had paid; these, consisting of some dresses now a trifle musty and tarnished, and tawdry trinkets, she had kept a list of and desired they should be sent back to the senior branch of her illustrious house of Mecklenburgh Strelitz.

On November 17, 1818, the queen expired whilst sitting in an easy-chair; the regent, the Duke of York, and two of the princesses being present. The other members of the royal family were conspicuous by their absence, a

fact which the *Times* commented on in the article announcing the royal demise. 'Were it safe to found a judgment,' says this leader, 'on the recent dispersion of the princes of the blood royal, and of some of the princesses, we might, however reluctantly, conclude that Her Majesty had not altogether succeeded in attaching to her the hearts of her children. The Duke of Cumberland is out of the question. The inflexible, though well-meant, determination of the queen to stigmatise her niece, by shutting the doors of the royal palace against her, may excuse strong feelings of estrangement or resentment, on the part of the duchess and of her husband; but that the Dukes of Clarence, Kent, and Cambridge at the same time should have quitted, as if by signal, their parent's death-bed, is a circumstance which in lower life would have at least astonished the community. The departure of the Princess Elizabeth,* the queen's favourite daughter, who

* The Princess Elizabeth married to His Serene Highness of Hesse Homburg, popularly styled 'Hesse Humbug,' who was described by Fremantle as 'a monster of a man—a vulgar-looking German corporal, whose breath and hide is a compound between tobacco and garlick. He has

married and took leave of her in the midst of that illness which it was pronounced would shortly bring her to the grave, may perhaps have been owing to the injunction of Her Majesty. The Duke of Gloucester stands in a more remote degree of relationship: Prince Leopold more distant still; but they all quitted the scene of suffering at a period when its fatal termination could not be doubted.' Notwithstanding the insupportable grief of the royal family, the building of the pavilion at Brighton was not discontinued for a day; and strange is it to read in the *Morning Chronicle* of November 24, the announcement that 'His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence will give a splendid ball next Thursday, at which the nobility, the officers down to the rank of lieutenant, and many persons high in civil affairs will be present.'

Her Majesty was buried at Windsor on the second of the following month with great state, when the Prince Regent acted as chief mourner.

about £300 per annum.' Another correspondent of the Marquis of Buckingham's, describing His Serene Highness, says, 'An uglier hound, with a snout buried in hair, I never saw.'

He evidently regarded the occasion as one on which he might indulge in one of those theatrical displays so dear to his royal soul, and went attired in a black cloak, long, and of 'a great amplitude of folds,' on the left breast of which was a star of brilliants, and round the neck were four collars of knighthood, whose colours finely contrasted with the weeds of woe, and glittered with excellent effect. It was night before the procession, surrounded by Lancers and Guards, reached St. George's chapel, and torches were lit and borne by the military. 'These,' says Mr. Bush, 'gleaming upon the soldiers' helmets, and partially disclosing now the hearse, then the long, solemn procession, winding its slow way with its trappings of death, presented a spectacle for the pencil of the muse.'

After the death of Her Majesty it was suggested by the regent to place 'the care of the king's sacred person in the Duke of York.' This guardianship consisted in two brief visits to the king weekly, for which it was proposed His Royal Highness should receive £10,000 a year. The duke, notwithstanding his pay as commander

of the forces, and as colonel of the Grenadier Guards, with other posts, whose salaries amounted in all to £36,000, was in debt to the extent of £200,000, and was in fact at this time insolvent. His property was assigned under bills of sale to fictitious creditors, in order that he might the better defraud the tradespeople and others who had been so foolish as to trust to his royal honour; but so little respect had these dupes for him, that at the order of one of them his horses and carriage were seized in the public street, whilst the royal duke was using them. It may be added here that at his death the duke's creditors received the sum of one shilling in the pound, by way of payment of his debts. One cannot wonder at Lord Minto's opinion that 'if anything can make a democracy in England it will be the Royal Family.'

In consequence of his need, he therefore grasped at this enormous salary, to be filched from the public pocket for his benefit. The announcement of awarding him this sum for such a duty caused wide indignation. His late nefarious transactions in connection with Mrs. Clarke were again brought forward, and so

stormy were the debates in Parliament on this question of the allowance, that he from very shame determined to forego the salary, but when he communicated this resolve to the regent, that royal man became furious.

‘So, sir,’ he said with a sneer, ‘you would be popular at our expense!’ The duke then changed his mind, and the sum was granted by Parliament; but he did not receive it for more than two years, when his royal father died.

To the public at large His Majesty had long ceased to exist: for years his lucid intervals had been rare, but his fits of frenzy had fortunately been rarer yet. Totally blind and deaf, almost deserted by his wife in the last years of her life, and by his children, worn and stooped, his white hair hanging on his shoulders, his silver beard sweeping his chest, he wandered purposelessly from room to room, in the suite of apartments allotted to him in his royal palace at Windsor, a desolate and melancholy figure. Waterloo had been lost and won; the idol of the French idolatry, the fear of Europe, had fallen from his high estate; the Bourbons once more sat on the throne of France; the Princess

Charlotte had wedded and died ; the Royal princesses had been given in marriage ; the princes had taken to themselves wives ; the queen and Duke of Kent had passed away, and yet of all these events the king had remained wholly unconscious—all the world was to him a blank.

On one occasion, during one of his lucid intervals, he received a visit from the queen, now an unusual thing. Her Majesty found him singing a hymn in a quavering mournful voice, whilst he accompanied himself on the harpsichord, a favourite instrument of his. When he had ceased, he hesitated for a moment, and went slowly down on his knees, when he prayed for Her Majesty, then for his family, and the nation, concluding with a touching petition for himself, that it might please God to avert his heavy calamity from him, but if not, to give him resignation to submit ; after which he burst into tears, and his brief gleam of reason vanished, leaving him once more in mental darkness. At times he would hold imaginary conversations with statesmen, long since dead and gone ; and on other occasions he lost all sense of his own identity, and believed himself dead.

‘I must have a new suit of clothes,’ he would say, ‘and I will have them black in memory of George the Third, he was a good man.’

One of his daughters, the Princess Elizabeth, speaking of him in her correspondence, says, ‘He considers himself no longer an inhabitant of this world, and often, when he has played one of his favourite tunes, observes that he was very fond of it when he was in the world. He speaks of the Queen and all his family, and hopes they are doing well now, for he loved them very much when he was with them.’

Towards the middle of January, 1820, it became evident to his doctors that his life was not destined to be of much longer duration, and his family were prepared for news of his expected demise. He lingered, however, till the 29th of the month, when the solemn toll of the great bell of St. Paul’s announced to his subjects that their sovereign was no more. He died calmly, but without recovering his reason during his last hours—the only one of his sons present at the dread moment being the Duke of York. He had reigned over sixty years, and had entered ‘o his eighty-second year.

CHAPTER VIII.

Schemes for a Royal Divorce—The Princess Abroad—The Milan Commission—The New Queen—Her Journey to London—The Trial begins—Lord John Russell's Hint to His Majesty—Italian Witnesses going to Westminster—Accusations against the Queen—Bergami in the Tent—Result of the Trial and General Rejoicings—Public Feeling against the King—Pamphlets and Ballads—The Broad-faced Naval Gentleman.

ALL this while the one predominant thought which seized and held forcible possession of the regent's brain, was how he should rid himself of the spouse who was not of his bosom. But four months after her departure from England, Brougham, in writing to Earl Grey, says, 'Certain it is that some movements towards a divorce have been in discussion at least at Carlton House;' but the hour for the execution of this treasured scheme was not yet at hand, and meanwhile the royal man bided his time, and plotted his plots.

On leaving England the princess had gone to Brunswick, where after tarrying for some time at her brother's court, and relieving her purse of a considerable sum for his benefit, she betook herself to Germany, and from thence to Italy, the land she had selected as that of her future residence. From time to time during her absence abroad, rumours reached England of acquaintances she had made unworthy of her notice as a British princess; of her characteristic familiarity with strangers; of her love of gaiety; and of her general carelessness of behaviour. Repudiated by her husband, separated from her child—at first by royal command, and then by death—bereft of friends, homeless and a wanderer, she grew reckless, and her indiscretions were construed by the spies who surrounded her into serious crimes.

‘From the first moment she quitted British ground,’ as the *Times* subsequently stated, ‘she was dogged and tracked by a band of lurking villains who were set to spy out all her actions, with the certainty that, if they could either find or impute crime, they should also find ready

and grateful auditors.' At Geneva it was said the princess had appeared at a ball, likewise honoured by Maria Louisa, the ex-Empress of France, dressed in the costume of Venus, which admitted a view of her back-bone to a considerable extent; at Naples she graced an entertainment, given by Murat, as the Genius of History, in a dress which, even in a warm climate, was not considered a burden to the shoulders; whilst at Athens she witnessed the Dervishes dancing. Such acts as these were quickly reported in England with due exaggeration, and she mischievously enjoyed raising the storm which, subsequently, almost overwhelmed her.

Once, when at Como, she entertained a guest whom she had strong reasons to suspect was one of her husband's spies, and she immediately entered into a light and frivolous conversation with him, and behaved with much familiarity; on which one of her suite privately warned her that her every word and action would be reported to the prince.

'I know it,' she replied, 'and therefore I speak and act as you see. The wasp leaves his sting in the wound, so do I. The regent will hear it?

I hope he will; I love to mortify him.' For this reason she courted the dangers that were almost her ruin.

Before she had been long abroad, her suite left her, disgusted, her enemies said, by her conduct; but such was not the case. Mr. St. Leger was obliged to return to England, as his health could not bear the fatigue of travelling; Lady Charlotte Lindsay left for the purpose of visiting her relatives, and subsequently rejoined her at Naples with her brother, Lord North; Sir William Gell, according to his subsequent evidence, took his departure because he disliked travelling in winter, and joined her when she returned from her tour in Palestine; whilst Mr. Keppel Craven was obliged to return to his family, in order to regulate some business. This suite was replaced by Italians; but, before most of her friends went their various ways, an actor had stepped on the scene, destined to play an important part in the tragedy of the princess's life. At Milan a courier had been dismissed for misconduct, when the Marquis Ghisilieri recommended in his place an Italian of good family named Bartolomeo Bergami. This individual,

from being a courier, was gradually raised to be chamberlain, and his name soon became scandalously connected with that of the princess in the mouths of her enemies.

But, notwithstanding the rumours which had been carried to England concerning her, no condemnatory step was taken until the death of the Princess Charlotte. A few months after that sad event, a secret commission, consisting of a chancery barrister named Leach, subsequently elevated to the post of vice-chancellor, Mr. Cooke, also a barrister, Mr. Powell, Colonel Brown, and Lord Stewart, were sent to Milan, near where the princess was then residing. Salaries were, of course, attached to the respective offices of these gentlemen, who had the power of rewarding in the handsomest manner such witnesses as bore testimony to their desires; so that the commission, it was subsequently stated by Sir Roland Ferguson in the House of Commons, cost the country between thirty and forty thousand pounds. When the princess became aware that this secret tribunal was sitting, she wrote a letter remonstrating with her husband, and demanding to know

its object, to which no attention was paid.

The commission examined several witnesses, many of whom were discharged servants of the princess, with whom ready terms could be made; where such failed, threats were used, and the result was that these gentlemen returned from whence they had come with evidence which they believed sufficient to blast the princess's character in the eyes of all men. She would have returned to England at once, but her chief adviser, Mr. Brougham, urged her to remain abroad, a counsel to which she submitted. No important step was taken by the regent towards the end he desired until the king's death, when the new monarch announced to his ministers that he must have a divorce. They were, however, not quite so ready to comply with his wishes as he had hoped, a fact that made the monarch exceedingly wrathful.

‘His Majesty is most firmly bent upon a divorce,’ writes Mr. Bankes to Lord Colchester; ‘but, as those who must carry his project into effect very naturally cast about and calculate their means, his ministers report to him unani- mously that it is *not feasible*, and neither can nor

ought to be attempted. He perseveres. He insists most obstinately. The ministers *positively refuse*. He threatens to dismiss them all, to which they reply that they are ready and willing to retire from his service.'

Lord Castlereagh, in writing to Lord Stewart, confirms this statement; the ministers received from the king, his lordship states, 'a written minute with a distinct intimation that, if they were not prepared to advise His Majesty to proceed by way of divorce, his determination was taken, namely, to change his government; and, if he could not form a government which would relieve him *to that extent*, His Majesty's intention was to retire to Hanover.'

His ministers, even when threatened with so stupendous a loss as the absence of His Majesty's sacred person from a nation that abhorred him, hesitated in condemning a powerless and persecuted woman; they were willing, however, to temporise, and consented to have her name omitted from the Liturgy of the English Church service, and to deny her the honour of coronation. With this the king was obliged to be satisfied for the present. The

omission of her name was an insult which the new queen felt deeply—not that it entailed her any spiritual loss, if the effects of the nation's prayers for the members of the royal family might be judged by their conduct, but because it was a grievous insult to her dignity. She therefore wrote at once to the premier in a note that betrayed far more spirit than knowledge of English—

‘The queen of this realm wishes to be informed, through the medium of Lord Liverpool, first minister to the king of this realm, for for which reason or motive the queen name has been left out of the general Prayer-books in England, and especially to prevent all her subjects to pay her such respect which is due to the queen. It is equally a great omission towards the king that his consort queen should be obliged to submit to such great neglect, or rather arise from a perfect ignorance of the archbishops of the real existence of the Queen Caroline of England.’

To this communication she received no reply. Earl Grosvenor afterwards remarked that, ‘feeling as he did the evils which the erasure of the

queen's name from the Liturgy was likely to entail upon the nation, as well as its repugnance to law and justice, he would, had he been Archbishop of Canterbury, have thrown the Prayer-book in the king's face sooner than have consented to it.'

She now resolved to return to England, and for this purpose passed rapidly through France. This movement had not been expected by the king, who believed and desired she would never return. Lord Hutchinson was therefore hastily despatched to meet her, and make her certain offers. Her income had ceased, Parliament having only granted it to her as Princess of Wales, and she was depending in a great measure on the present government, who were the king's tools, and her avowed enemies. Lord Hutchinson was therefore commissioned to offer her a bribe of £50,000 for life, on condition that she would not assume the title of Queen of England, or any title attached to the royal family of England, and that she should not reside in or visit any part of the United Kingdom. Fearing she might refuse this offer, Lord Liverpool begged to inform her confidentially

that 'the decision was taken to proceed against her as soon as she sets her foot on the British shores.'

This proposal she at once rejected with scorn ; her spirit, she said, was yet strong, and she would go to England and demand justice of the nation. She then dismissed her foreign attendants and set out for Calais. During her absence her popularity had not flagged, and the spirit she displayed in bearding the royal lion in his den went far towards increasing it, whilst even her enemies admitted that such an act was not like that of a guilty woman.

Arrived at Dover, she was received by a royal salute, as no orders to the contrary had been received by the garrison ; already vast numbers had collected to receive her, and she, being impatient to land, got into an open boat and was rowed to shore. The instant she landed she was received by a shout of welcome, that was renewed again and again with ever-increasing force. The horses were taken from the carriage which was to convey her to the York Hotel, and she was drawn through the streets by a right eager crowd, preceded by a band playing

a triumphal march ; whilst two large flags, bearing the inscription, ' God save Queen Caroline,' waved at either side of the carriage. A guard of honour was placed at the door of the hotel, but as its presence did not seem to please the people, the queen sent word to thank the commandment and to decline the guard, as her reliance was placed on the first principles and cordial attachment of the people ; the military then played ' God save the King ' and retired.

A few hours after her landing, a deputation presented her with a congratulatory address, the first of hundreds which were to follow ; and after a short rest she got into her carriage, which was once more drawn by the people, outside the town ; the horses were then put in, and she proceeded to Canterbury. It was almost dark when she reached that city, where she was met by a procession bearing over a hundred flambeaux, whilst again the horses were removed from the carriage, and she was drawn by an excited crowd to the ' Fountain Hotel.' But this was not all ; at the inn, the gallant mayor and his aldermen brave were waiting to receive Her Majesty, and to offer

her, in fine ponderous phrases, their pompous congratulations. In the morning the scene of the previous evening was renewed; the streets, windows, and balconies were lined with people; the mob drew the carriage; the church bells rang, cheers filled the air, and everywhere were signs of rejoicing.

Her journey to town was indeed one continued triumph, which reached its climax as she approached London. At Dartford, a number of horsemen came to meet, and greet, and accompany her on her way, whilst at Shooter's Hill, hundreds of vehicles of all descriptions joined the procession, which now increased every moment. At Blackheath all kinds and conditions of men and women were awaiting her arrival; they received her with deafening cheers, and followed in her wake to town. Here all business was suspended; dense crowds filled the thoroughfares through which she passed; handkerchiefs were shaken, hats tossed in the air, bands played, banners waved, and cheers greeted her everywhere. The procession now extended for miles, and was headed by a goodly cavalcade, which bent its mis-

chievous way up Pall Mall, so as to pass His Majesty's royal residence, Carlton House. As it approached the palace, the cheers gained fresh strength, and loud were the repeated huzzas announcing the queen's arrival, which were as gall and wormwood to the kingly soul of the royal monarch within, whose wrath was passing great. The merry crowd swept on in triumph to South Audley Street, the residence of Alderman Wood, the queen's friend, where she was obliged to stay for some days, as no house had been prepared for her reception. When she had entered the mansion, the crowd blocked the street from end to end, and showed no disposition to disperse until she appeared at the balcony, and acknowledged the loyal feelings of her subjects by many smiles and curtsies.

On that same day, June 6, 1820, His Majesty sent a message to the House of Lords, stating he considered it necessary, in consequence of the arrival of the queen, to communicate certain papers respecting her conduct since her departure from the kingdom. He added that he had the fullest confidence Parliament w

adopt that course of proceeding which the justice of the case and the dignity of His Majesty's crown required. This message was delivered by Lord Castlereagh to the House of Lords, and by Lord Liverpool to the Commons; and each of these gentlemen laid before him on the tables of the respective houses a green bag, supposed to contain the papers relative to the Milan Commission.

Next day Mr. Brougham delivered a message from Her Majesty, in which she informed her faithful Commons, she had been induced to return to England in consequence of measures pursued against her honour and peace by secret agents abroad, whose conduct was sanctioned by the government at home. It was fourteen years, she reminded them, since the first cruel investigation was made into her conduct, from which fiery ordeal she had come forth scathless. She now desired an open investigation, in which she might see both the charges and the witnesses against her, a privilege not denied to the meanest subject in the realm. She loudly protested, in the face of the sovereign, the Parliament, and the country, against a

secret tribunal to examine documents privately prepared by her adversaries, a proceeding unknown to the law of the land, and a flagrant violation of all the principles of justice. From this, the only danger she had any reason to fear, she appealed to the House of Commons to protect her. These preliminaries over, the fight commenced.

On the following day, Lord Liverpool moved that a select committee of fifteen lords be chosen to examine the papers relative to the queen. The chairman of the committee was Dr. Manners Sutton, Archbishop of Canterbury. Having taken this step, the ministry were anxious to ascertain how far they would be supported by their friends. The result of this inquiry was that a large portion of the community were strongly adverse to the proceedings; and some members of the House of Commons who declared themselves friends alike of the king and queen, suggested that an amicable arrangement of the unhappy business might be arrived at. To this the queen was not adverse, and the Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh, on the part of the king, and Mr. Brougham and

Denman on the part of Her Majesty, were selected as those best suited to be entrusted with the management of the negotiations, which, however, proved unsatisfactory. The case, therefore, went on, and the report of the secret committee selected to examine 'the certain papers connected with Her Majesty's conduct,' gave it as their judgment that those 'documents contained allegations charging her with an adulterous connection with a foreigner, originally in her service in a menial capacity; and attributing to Her Majesty a continued course of conduct highly unbecoming Her Majesty's rank and station, and of the most licentious character.'

The day after this report was made, Lord Dacre presented a petition from the queen, stating that she was ready to defend herself from these gross charges, and praying that she might be heard through her counsel; this was refused, the excuse being given that such a proceeding was irregular. Lord Liverpool then introduced the bill known as 'an act to deprive Her Majesty, Caroline Amelia Elizabeth, of the title, prerogatives, rights, privileges, and exemp-

tions of queen-consort of the realm, and to dissolve the marriage between His Majesty and the said Caroline Amelia Elizabeth.' This bill charged her with carrying on 'a licentious, disgraceful, and adulterous intercourse' with Bartolomeo Bergami. When Her Majesty was served with a copy by Sir Thomas Tyrwhitt, she received it with an emotion which she in vain sought to conceal. Had the prosecution commenced a quarter of a century earlier, she remarked, it might have suited her husband's purpose better. 'But,' she added, 'as we shall not meet in this world, I hope we shall in the next, where justice will be rendered me.'

This bill, the first of its kind introduced since the days of Henry VIII., was regarded as a vile proceeding, which might serve as a dangerous precedent. As Lord John Russell begged to remind His Majesty, in a letter to that gracious personage, which pointed a moral, 'in uncrowning a head without necessity, we see much to alarm us in the example, nothing to console us in the immediate benefit; not,' says his lordship, remembering that he addressed a monarch, the first of whose line were a century before as

strangers in a strange land, 'not that we do not recognise the right of Parliament to alter the succession to the crown; none respect more than we do the Act of Settlement which took away the crown from its hereditary successors, and gave it to the House of Brunswick.' Then follows a hint that Parliament might be called on to regulate the succession once more. The *Times* powerfully stigmatised the bill, and spoke of the desired divorce as 'an infamous object sought through illegal means;' it pointed out that, instead of the divorce following the proof of adultery, the charge was made and the divorce sought for in the same bill. 'It would be little less remarkable,' it added, 'if the divorce were passed first, and the adultery were proved afterwards.'

The queen, through Lord Dacre, petitioned the House of Lords against the bill; the only alleged foundation for it, she urged, was the report of the secret committee, proceeding solely on papers submitted to them, and before whom no single witness had been examined. She pointed out that her counsel had been refused a hearing at the bar, at a stage of the investiga-

tion when it was most natural they should be heard, and that a list of the witnesses, whose names were known to her accusers, was refused her; she therefore protested against the whole proceedings, and once more prayed that her counsel might be admitted to state her claims at the bar of the House of Lords. Her counsel, Brougham and Denman, were then, when refusal was no longer possible, admitted, and Brougham asked for a delay of two months previous to further proceedings, in order to enable the queen to summon her witnesses for the defence; this was finally allowed.

During this cessation of hostilities, Her Majesty addressed a long and stirring letter to her husband, setting forth her violent wrongs and protesting her innocence.

'When to calumniate, revile, and betray me, became the sure path to honour and riches, it would have been strange indeed if calumniators, revilers, and traitors, had not abounded.' She said, 'Your Court became much less a scene of polished manners and refined intercourse, than that of low intrigue and scurrility. Spies, bacchanalian tale-bearers, and foul con-

spirators, swarmed in those places which had before been the resort of sobriety, virtue, and honour.' Speaking of the bill, she continues, 'I must either protest against this mode of trial, or, by tacitly consenting to it, suffer my honour to be sacrificed. No innocence can secure the accused, if the judges and the jurors be chosen by the accuser; and, if I were tacitly to submit to a tribunal of this description, I should be instrumental in my own dishonour.' She finally concludes: 'You wrested from me my child, and with her my only comfort and consolation. You sent me sorrowing through the world, and even in my sorrows pursued me with unrelenting persecution. Having left me nothing but my innocence, you would now by a mockery of justice deprive me even of the reputation of possessing that. The poisoned bowl and the poignard are means more manly than perjured witnesses and partial tribunals; and they are less cruel, inasmuch as life is less valuable than honour. If my life would have satisfied Your Majesty, you should have had it on the sole condition of giving me a place in the same tomb with my

child; but, since you would send me dishonoured to the grave, I will resist the attempt, with all the means that it shall please God to give me.'

This letter, from which these extracts are taken, being inserted in many of the daily papers, published as a pamphlet, freely circulated, and posted on almost every wall in the metropolis, served in no small measure to rouse up the bitterest feelings against the king and his ministers. The whole nation from end to end was dangerously excited against the measures about to be taken, and the sympathy felt for the queen was almost universal. Public meetings were held in almost every parish and county in England, when votes of confidence in her innocence were passed, and hopes that she might escape from the toils of her enemies were expressed; whilst the corporations of all the principal cities and towns in England, headed by the Common Council of London, presented her with addresses. These deputations were generally followed by enormous crowds, which usually shaped themselves into processions, with bands

and banners; so that from the day of her landing until weeks after the termination of the trial, London was kept at a fever pitch of excitement. Nor was the object of the general enthusiasm at all adverse to it.

‘I have derived,’ she said, in reply to one of these presentations, ‘unspeakable consolations from the zealous and constant attachment of this warm-hearted, just, and generous people, to live at home with, and to cherish whom will be the chief happiness of the remainder of my days.’

Meanwhile, preparations for the great trial were being rapidly made, and the Italians selected to bear evidence against the queen—who, it was generally understood, were to be liberally rewarded—were summoned to England. Arriving at Dover, they were treated roughly by a large crowd, who had gathered to give them a warm reception, and, but for the protection of the military, it is doubtful if they would ever have seen London town. When there, however, they were scarcely less open to danger, and the ministry, after having moved them from one residence to another,

finally shipped them off to Holland, until such time as their presence was necessary in the House of Lords. When that period arrived, they were conveyed at night from the docks in an open boat, rowed with muffled oars, and lodged at Cotton Garden, close to Westminster. The queen announced her intention of being present in the House of Lords every day during her trial.

After a short residence at South Audley Street, a house was procured for her in Portman Street, from where she moved to Brandenburgh House, near Hammersmith, where volunteer sentinels kept nightly watch over her safety. But Brandenburgh House being considered too inconvenient a residence for her during the trial, she gratefully accepted an offer made her of a house in St. James's Square by the widow of Sir Philip Francis. Driving from this residence every day to Westminster, she was obliged to pass Carlton House, at which point of her journey the cheers of the crowd, who invariably accompanied her, were pitched in a higher and more defiant key.

On August 17 this trial, which will be for

ever memorable in the history of this country, commenced. The queen, accompanied by her faithful friend, Lady Anne Hamilton, drove to the House of Lords in a new state carriage drawn by six bay horses, and preceded by her chamberlain and Alderman Wood in a carriage drawn by four horses; vast crowds lined every inch of her route, and she was received by the heartiest acclamations. Never, indeed, had the public been so demonstrative; loud cries of 'The queen! the queen!—long live Queen ~~Charlotte!~~' were shouted, and taken up by the throng, long before her carriage came in view; whilst the house-tops were crowded, as well as the windows and balconies, by those anxious to catch sight of her. Her Majesty, according to an eloquent description in the daily papers, was dressed in black, 'with a rich white lace veil, which flowed gracefully over her shoulders, and hung like an antique vestment over her dress.'

Preparations had already been made at Westminster to withstand the expected crush, or any rebellious outbreak of the multitude; the whole area in front of the House of Lords was enclosed

by double rows of strong timber fences ; within this a large body of constables were placed, under the orders of such dignitaries as the high bailiff and the high constable, all being in attendance before seven o'clock in the morning. A body of the Foot Guards were posted at the King's Bench Office and the Record Office ; gunboats were stationed at the river-side of Westminster Hall ; a troop of Life Guards formed a line in front of the principal gate ; a detachment of Foot Guards were posted under the piazza of the House of Lords ; a body of the Surrey Mounted Patrol paraded Parliament Street, Whitehall, and Charing Cross ; whilst another detachment of the Life Guards rode through Abingdon Street ; it seemed, indeed, as if a battle were about being fought instead of a cause being tried.

Arrived at the House of Lords, the queen was received with military honours, and conducted by Sir Thomas Tyrwhitt and Mr. Brougham to the place assigned her near her counsel, where a throne-like chair and cushion were fixed for her. At her entrance into the house, the peers rose to their feet and bowed,

and she acknowledged the courtesy with dignity and grace. The first days of the trial bore but little interest, with the exception of that aroused by a speech of Brougham's, in which he referred to the queen's generosity, which induced her to refrain from all recrimination, and mentioned the unusual circumstance of the defendant in a divorce case being prevented from exposing the guilt of the accuser. The trial could have but one aspect in the eyes of the people, he remarked, and they will naturally say, "Here is a man who wishes to get rid of his wife; he talks of the honour and safety of the country, yet its dearest interest, its peace, its morals, and its happiness are to be satisfied to gratify his desires."

After the king's attorney-general had opened the case for the plaintiff, those who were to bear witness against the queen were called, the first of whom was Theodore Majocchi, formerly in Her Majesty's service. He had no sooner appeared than Her Majesty, overcome for the moment, exclaimed, 'Oh, traitor!' and at once retired to the apartment allotted to her use; nor did she again appear in the House of Lords

during that day. Majocchi was the principal witness, and the sum and substance of his evidence was that a tent had been erected on the deck of a vessel in which the queen sailed, that she slept in the tent, and that Bergami slept there also ; furthermore, that Bergami attended her when in her bath. This evidence was regarded as damning by her enemies, and even her friends grew fearful of the result. It was the best card the prosecutors had to play, and the king's solicitor-general, Copley, made the most of it by purposely protracting his examination until such time as he hoped its effects had sunk so deeply into the public mind that they could not be dispelled by any subsequent contradiction.

When Copley had finished, Majocchi was subjected by Brougham to a most searching and rigorous cross-examination, which had the effect of tearing his evidence to shreds, and utterly demolishing him. It was shown that though Bergami rested beneath the same tent with the queen, the tent was open on all sides, as was rendered necessary by the heat of the climate ; that sailors passed to and fro continually ; that

the light of a tropical sky rendered it possible to see all that passed within the tent at any hour; and that whilst in the bath she invariably wore a bathing costume. A cloud of witnesses followed, and a very dark cloud they were. One of these, Rastelli, was another servant of the queen's, whom she had discharged for robbery. So palpable were the lies uttered by this rogue, that those who had summoned him became heartily ashamed of him, and sent him quietly away before his re-examination could take place. Another of them, Louisa Demont, had formerly passed herself off as the Countess Colombier. This distinguished lady had also been dismissed from the queen's service, and in her cross-examination admitted she 'had not spoken true,' whilst at the same time a light was thrown on the motives which had induced her to favour this country with her presence. She had received a mysterious letter without a signature, proposing that she should set off for London under the pretence of being a governess, and promising that in return for her compliance she would be rewarded with 'high protection and a brilliant fortune in a short time:' she

was also informed that she might draw on a certain bank for whatever amount she pleased. As Brougham reminded the lords, the witnesses which the Crown had ventured to call were everyone of them irreparably damaged in their credit: their testimony he characterised as 'inadequate to prove a debt, impotent to deprive of a civil right, ridiculous to convict of the lowest offence, scandalous if brought forward to support a charge of the highest nature which the law knows, monstrous to ruin the honour, to blast the name of an English queen.'

The witnesses who were brought forward in favour of Her Majesty included Lords Guildford, Glenbervie, and Llandaff, Lady Charlotte Lindsay, Sir William Gell, and Sir J. P. Beresford, all of whom had been in her company abroad, and who had failed to see any improprieties in her conduct. The case for the Crown closed on September 7, and the House adjourned till October 3, when Brougham defended his royal client in a speech remarkable for its power and eloquence, which delighted, and even surprised, the most sanguine of his friends. But if it astonished his friends, it appalled his adversaries

by its boldness. 'He declared,' says Rush, 'that nothing should check him in fulfilling his duty, and that he would recriminate upon the king if necessary. He said that an English advocate could look to nothing but the rights of his client; and that even should the country itself suffer, his feelings as a patriot must give way to his professional obligations.' His speech made a strong impression on his hearers, and this was increased by Denman's forcible words which followed. The debates which ensued were stormy. Earl Grey declared if the bill passed it would prove the most disastrous step the House had ever taken: he charged the servants of the Crown with the grossest neglect of duty, in the first instance in listening only to *ex parte* evidence, and giving a willing credence to the most exaggerated and unfounded calumnies: whilst Lord Grosvenor said, that sooner than remain one of His Majesty's administration, he would, 'under such circumstances as the present, have trampled upon the seals of office.'

But the lords temporal were not more divided amongst themselves than the lords spiritual. The Archbishop of York, and some minor

luminaries of the church, refused to recognize a divorce; but his Grace of Canterbury proving himself to be a man of principles, ingeniously contrived to shift when necessary, and informing such of their lordships as might entertain any foolish conscientious scruples about parting those whom God had joined together, that divorces were consistent with his Master's word: nay, 'he must tell their lordships that they were directly and expressly declared to be lawful by our Saviour Himself.' On hearing which, the Right Reverend Father in God, the Bishop of London, jumped on his ecclesiastical feet, and gave his testimony that 'divorces were authorised by our Saviour': he furthermore added, for the benefit of his unenlightened and uncourtly brethren the information, equally religious and true, that 'the king could do no wrong, he could not commit a fault, far less a crime.' Strange to say, there were those among his hearers who laboured in such gross and heretical darkness as not to believe the words of this spiritual teacher; and the height of profanity was reached next day when an epigram, which ran as follows, gained circulation, relative to his wise speech—

‘Not commit any folly nor do any wrong,
May be said or be sung as a very good song ;
But what, don't *you* own then, in this maxim so starch,
He can add to a bishop the prefix of arch.’

Whilst the daily papers reminded the Archbishop of Canterbury of Wolsey's fate, and thought that in a little while he might find the famous lines, ‘Had I but serv'd my God with half the zeal I serv'd my king, he would not in mine age have left me naked to mine enemies,’ applicable to his own case.

When the votes were taken against one clause of the bill, the majority against the queen was twenty-eight ; and she at once signed a protest against the proceedings. Her Majesty, this document said, ‘now most deliberately, and before God, asserts that she is wholly innocent of the crime laid to her charge.’ When the House divided on the question, ‘That the bill be now read a third time,’ there were one hundred and eight contents and ninety-nine not contents, which left the Crown a majority of nine, the exact number of peers who were members of the cabinet. Lord Liverpool, after a short deliberation, then rose and said he could not be ignorant of the state of public feeling regarding the measure, and

that the Crown had come to the conclusion of not proceeding further with it.

The queen was in her apartment in the House of Lords when news was brought her that the bill had been abandoned. She received the intelligence in silence, and with perfect composure, not perhaps knowing how it would affect her, but, on reaching her carriage, burst into a tempest of tears. Though nominally the Crown had gained the day, yet it was felt that in reality Her Majesty had triumphed, and the rejection of the bill was regarded, as the famous Lord Erskine said, as ‘the victory of right and justice over wrong and malignity.’

During the great trial the people had continued in a state of excitement bordering on revolt; and this feeling was largely and dangerously shared in by the military. One regiment of cavalry vowed they ‘would fight up to their knees in blood for the queen;’ whilst Lord Brougham tells us, in his ‘Life and Times,’ that during the examination of Majocchi, when the evidence seemed most unfavourable to Her Majesty, the Guards, in their undress trousers and foraging-caps, came to a house where her

friends were and called out, 'Never mind; it may be going badly, but, better or worse, we are all with you;' for which language they were ordered out of London, but mutinied at Kingston. On another occasion the military stationed at the mews at Charing Cross, who had betrayed symptoms of discontent at the crowded state of their barrack, were invited by the mob to come out and join them in a demonstration for the queen; heaven only knows what might have happened, but that Lord Sidmouth, who chanced to be riding by, seeing the imminent danger, galloped to the Horse Guards at full speed, and called out a troop of the 2nd Life Guards to quell this revolutionary spirit. It was indeed believed by many that, were the Duke of Kent, the most popular member of his family, living, a revolution would have broken out in his favour, and the country have been probably steeped in the horrors of civil warfare.

This fact was fully recognised at the time, as there is abundance of evidence in the public press and private correspondence of the period to show. Even the Attorney-General, as the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville writes to the

Marquis of Buckingham, 'in his speech yesterday in the House of Commons, used the expression "that there was no doubt that a revolution was in contemplation.'"

The storm of public abuse which burst over the king's head was daily added to by publications the most keenly satirical, personal, and abusive, all of which His Majesty, who lived in strict seclusion during this time, thought well to overlook.

Denman, the queen's counsel, in his famous speech, which had followed Brougham's, had compared His Gracious Majesty to Nero, and the *Times* had followed suit by contrasting him with Henry VIII., to the favour of the latter; upon which hints, the general press ransacked history for the most infamous characters it contained, and placed them on a parallel with the sovereign lord and king. Pamphlets, scurrilous poems, and ridiculous caricatures were issued almost hourly, and many of them are yet preserved in our National Library. Amongst the most popular of these publications were, 'A Peep at the Divan,' 'Nero Vanquished,' 'The Degraded

‘ Oh! dear, what can the matter be?

Caroline’s come, lack-a-day.

I hoped she’d have staid—then I’d get a new spouse, and
I mention’d my wish to my friends in the House, and
They made her an offer of fifty bright thousand,
If she would keep out of the way.

Oh! dear, what can the matter be?

‘ But, oh! dear, if I had kept single,

With all virtuous ladies of title I’d mingle.

And then laugh to think how each husband’s ears tingle,
And make them all proud of their horns.

I swore, when to Caroline first I was married,
I’d protect her as long as my carcass I carried;
But, alas! ever since I have wish’d she was buried,
Or that she had never been born.

Oh! dear, what can the matter be?’

‘ The Acts of Adonis the Great ’ was written in Scriptural style, and, as an instance of the liberty allowed the press, may be quoted :

‘ And it came to pass, in the reign of Guelpho, King of Bull, there was much murmuring throughout all the land.

‘ For the king’s son Gorge, which, being interpreted in the Bullish, signifieth *Great Eater and Drinker*, had done evil in the sight of the law, and had committed drunkenness and debauchery in high and low places.

‘ Moreover, he had dwelt with concubines and evil counsellors, and had filled the land with

abominations and uncleanness, and had wasted the treasure of the children of Bull in debauchery, and the tradesmen of Bull wept, and put on sackcloth and ashes; for he was deep in their debt, and they mourned that they could not recover it.

‘And they cried out, with loud voices, “Oh, Gorge, thou son of Guelpho, pay thy people.”

‘And the king’s son was troubled at the words of the children of Bull, and he smote his whiskers, and cursed them.

‘And he took unto wife Enilorae, the daughter of Brun.

‘But the concubines and evil counsellors were wroth that he had taken her to wife, seeing that he would no longer give unto them riches and much treasure.

‘And they conspired together to fill his heart with lies, and they tempted him, and mocked his wife Enilorae.

‘And they made him drunk with wine; and he mocked her also.

‘And there was murmuring all over the land, and the people hated Gorge, because he had dared to mock Enilorae his wife.

‘And Gorge was drunk with wine every day, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, and his face was bloated with drink, and the tip of his nose was of a blue colour.

‘Now King Guelpho waxed old, and his sight departed from him, and his senses fled, and he was like a new-born infant.

‘And the nobles of the land and the captains of the hosts, and all the wise men gathered themselves together, and they mourned because of the exceeding weakness of the king.

‘And they said unto each other, “It is fitting we should have another ruler, seeing the king can no longer govern his people,” and they appointed Gorge his son to reign over them.

‘And they called him re-gent, which, in the Bullish language, signifieth, “No longer black-guard,” and all the people prayed he might alter his ways, and do that which was right.

‘And he was two score and eight years old when he filled the seat of his father, and he wore a wig of many curls.

‘And Queen Snuffy, his mother, died, and she was buried in the sepulchre of the princes of Bull.

‘And she bequeathed unto her loving son Gorge a huge vessel of Strasburg, and tears came into his eyes.

‘And the people put on black garments, and the tobacconists mourned over all the land, and there was a fall in the price of snuff of one silver sixpence in the pound.

‘And Enilorae, his wife, said unto her counsellors, “Wherefore should I tarry longer in the land, seeing my husband setteth an evil example and debaucheth the morals of the people? Verily I say unto ye, I will leave this land, and travel to some far country, for my husband protecteth me not, neither endeavoureth he to do good unto me.”

‘And she departed out of the land, saying, “My husband Gorge disregardeth his marriage vow, neither careth he for my welfare.”’

Perhaps the height of irony was reached when addresses were proposed to be offered to His Majesty, to congratulate him on ‘the happy escape of his illustrious consort from the snares of her enemies;’ and the depth of ridicule sounded by the following advertisement:

‘STRAYED AND MISSING.

‘An infirm elderly gentleman in a Public Office lately left his home, just after dreadfully ill-using his wife about half-a-crown, and trying to beat her. He had long complained a great deal of his forehead, and lately had a leech put upon him. He was last seen walking swiftly towards the Horns without a crown to his hat, accompanied by some evil-disposed persons, who tied a great green bag to his tail full of crackers, which he mistook for sweetmeats, and burnt himself dreadfully. Every person he met in this deplorable condition tried to persuade him to go back, but in vain. He is very deaf and very obstinate, and cannot bear to be looked at or spoken to. It is supposed he has been carried off by some artful female. He may be easily known by his manners. He fancies himself the politest man in Europe, because he knows how to bow and to offer a pinch of snuff; and he thinks himself the greatest man in Europe, because people have honoured him and let him have his own way. He is so fond of tailoring that he lately began

a suit that will take him his life to complete. He delights in playing at soldiers, supposes himself a cavalry officer, and makes speeches that others write for him in a field-marshal's uniform. Sometimes he fancies himself "Glorious Apollo." His concerns are very much deranged. Not long ago he imported a vast quantity of Italian images at enormous prices upon credit; since then things have gone all against him, and he has been in a very desponding state. It is of the utmost consequence to himself that he should be at his post, or he may lose his place, one of his predecessors some time ago having been cashiered for his misconduct. If this should meet his eye, it is earnestly requested that he should return to his duty.'

Nor was it at the king alone that these poison-tipped arrows were driven. One, at least, of his royal brothers came in for a share of them; this was the Duke of Clarence, afterwards known as His Sacred Majesty, William IV. He had once been the most friendly member of his family towards the queen, but had in her days of danger not only forsaken, but grossly calumniated her.

Rush narrates, that Denman, when making his famous speech, turned to where this royal duke sat, and, fixing his eyes on him, called out, 'Come forth, thou slanderer!' When, according to the *Morning Chronicle*, the lords gave their votes on the queen's bill, they generally 'preserved decorum on whichever side they determined; but the Duke of Clarence, a prince of the blood royal, brother-in-law and cousin-german to the accused, distinguished himself from all others by the vehemence of his manner.' Shortly after the trial, Turner, of Aldersgate Street, published a pamphlet which commenced—

'ABSCONDED.

'The Slanderer, a broad-faced, naval gentleman, about fifty-five years of age, accustomed to slander, and late an inhabitant of the river Jordan. He was last seen in the gallery of a place of public entertainment; and has lately been particularly anxious to disseminate lies and other improprieties, in the hope of obtaining a crown which had been sily offered him,' &c.

But the whole of this pamphlet will not bear republication.

CHAPTER IX.

The Queen's Thanksgiving—The Coronation and the King's Vanity—Exclusion of Her Majesty and its Effects—Her Death and Remarkable Funeral—Riots and Bloodshed—The King with his Irish Subjects—O'Connell and the Modern Cæsar—The King's Seclusion—His Eccentric Life at Windsor—The Marchioness of Conyngham and her Despotic Rule—The King's Last Days—His Love of Mimicry—His Hallucinations and Death.

THE people were satisfied with the victory which the queen had gained, and rejoiced over it exceedingly; for three successive nights London was illuminated, and presented a blaze of light from end to end. 'A town relieved from a twelvemonth's siege,' says the *Morning Chronicle*, 'could not have displayed more tumultuous gladness.' Bands patrolled the streets; bon-fires blazed in the squares; the effigies of those who had borne false witness against the queen were paraded through the

town, and hung high upon a mimic gallows ; the windows of houses which exhibited no lights were ruthlessly smashed ; the residences of Lord Castlereagh and Liverpool were guarded by the military ; and great was the general excitement.

Amongst the first to call on Her Majesty and offer her their congratulations, were Prince Leopold and the Duke of Sussex ; the latter had been summoned to the House of Peers by the Lord Chancellor for the second reading of the bill, but had stoutly refused compliance. Their example was quickly followed by numbers of the nobility ; many old friends flocked round her, and addresses poured in on her by the hundred. Her triumph had such effect that the funds rapidly rose, 'and have,' says the *Times*, 'continued rising since the receipt of intelligence in the city that this bill, this nightmare on the national credit and tranquillity, had vanished into the regions of utter darkness whence it originated.' Immediately after her trial she applied to the premier to be furnished with a suitable residence and provision ; to which Lord Liverpool replied, the king had no intention of

permitting her to reside in any of the royal palaces, but the allowance she had enjoyed would be continued to her. A subscription was then set on foot for the purpose of building her a palace 'at once befitting the dignity of the queen, the gift of the people, and their sympathy in her sufferings from the first moment of her landing on the English shore.' Large subscriptions were received, and, had she lived, the palace would no doubt have been erected.

She now determined to proceed to St. Paul's in state, there to return public thanks for her recent delivery from the hands of her enemies. When intimation of this was given by the Lord Mayor to the dean and chapter of the cathedral, they were by no means ready to lend their aid towards carrying out the necessary arrangements, having already received due instructions from high quarters. Lord Sidmouth, in a letter to the dean, Dr. Van Mildred, Bishop of Llandaff—a mild and paternal shepherd, who had expressed himself in favour of the royal divorce, and had been obliged to take refuge from a flock that had ousted him from his parish of Ewelme—regretted 'it was wholly out of the power of

the government to prevent Her Majesty's intention of attending divine service at St. Paul's Cathedral from being carried into effect.'

It was arranged by the ruling powers that no special service should be held; that the doors of the church should be thrown open to the public as upon ordinary occasions; and, moreover, that the Lord Mayor and Corporation would be held responsible for any injury the cathedral might sustain. On November 30, the queen came in such state as she could summon, and was attended by a voluntary guard of honour, consisting of fifty horsemen and an immense number of people. She was received at Temple Bar by the Lord Mayor, sheriffs, sword-bearer, and many members of the Corporation, who conducted her to the City. The church was crowded to excess, but it was noted that two seats were vacant, the bishop's throne and the dean's seat, both of these good men having written to the Lord Mayor prohibiting them from being used. All that the Dean and Chapter could do to lessen the effect of the service was carefully done. In the Litany no mention was made of the queen's name, and in the

general 'thanking,' Mr. Hayes, one of the minor canons, who was the officiating clergyman, omitted the particular thanksgiving which it was customary to offer up at the request of any individual, and which the queen had desired might be offered on her behalf.

When the service was over, Her Majesty and the procession returned in the same manner as they had come, and, notwithstanding the great and excited crowds which surged through the thoroughfares, no injury was done. Even the saintly Bishop of Llandaff afore-mentioned admitted that 'this strange exhibition had gone off with less disgrace to the country than might have been expected; although, after all,' added his spiritual lordship, 'it had been a mockery of religious solemnity at which every serious Christian must shudder.'

Her Majesty was destined to appear at but one more public celebration, and then the curtain descended upon the troubled drama of her life for evermore. This was at the coronation of the king, fixed for July 19, 1821, a pageant celebrated with much pomp and state, and all that theatrical effect so dear to His Majesty.

For days and nights he held grave council with his friends and flatterers as to the dresses, colours, and combinations which were to make up this fine show, in which he was to be the observed of all observers, and which cost the nation the sum of £250,000. His Sacred Majesty intended to surround himself with such royal magnificence as would dazzle the eyes of his subjects, and no expense was therefore spared. His own robes, which were to be worn but a few short hours, cost his subjects the extravagant sum of £25,000, and so charmed was his royal soul by their splendour, that he had one of his servants dressed up in them, and ordered him to parade up and down the apartments, whilst His Majesty lay back in his chair lost in rapture and admiration at their effect. The king afterwards had his picture taken in these robes, and so proud and delighted was he with the presentment of his magnificence that he sent copies of it to all the courts and British embassies in Europe.

The queen had addressed a letter to her royal spouse, praying that she, his lawful wife, might also be crowned, to which prayer a brief answer

was returned by Lord Liverpool, informing her she 'could form no part in the ceremonial.' Not intimidated by this reply, she petitioned the Secretary of State for the Home Department to the same effect, when she was informed she had 'neither claim or right to the ceremonial.' However, Her Majesty was not yet willing to give up the point, and she announced her intention of being present at the coronation as one of the audience, if she could not be one of the actors, and demanded of Lord Sidmouth that a suitable place might be provided for her. His lordship in return informed her His Majesty would not allow her to be present. She was, however, determined that she would, and, notwithstanding that her legal advisers begged of her to abandon the resolution, she, accompanied by Lady Anne Hamilton, Lord Hood, her present chamberlain, and Lady Hood, drove to Westminster in a carriage drawn by six horses.

The people, faithful to her to the last, hailed her as usual with cheers, and accompanied her to the Abbey; the cries of 'The queen, the queen!' were heard within the sacred walls, and the doors were immediately bolted on the inside.

Never was there such a remarkable scene. Already a dense and motley crowd had collected in the vicinity, to witness as much of the royal pomp as might be vouchsafed to their hungering eyes. Men pushed their way with good-humoured violence, women struggled and shrieked, curses and laughter fell on the ear, and above the loud din could be heard the voice of authority, speaking through the lips of Mr. Townshend, the Bow-Street officer, a little man in a flaxen wig and a broad-brimmed hat, crying aloud, ‘Gentlemen and ladies, take care of your pockets, for you are surrounded by thieves.’ Alas! this warning had fallen too late on the ears of one who had travelled a far way, a Welsh gentleman, who replied to the Bow-Street officer,

‘Mr. Townshend, Mr. Townshend, I have been robbed of my gold watch and purse containing all my money. What am I to do to get home? I have come two hundred miles to see this sight, and, instead of receiving satisfaction or hospitality, I am robbed by those cut-throats called the swell mob.’

The crowd evinced no sympathy for this sor-

rowing gentleman whom it merely laughed at, and to whom it replied in an odd manner by singing 'Home, sweet Home,' mingled with cries of 'Get back to your goats, my good fellow.' On his remonstrating with his mocking, yelling enemies, now dancing round him in derision, his hat was beaten over his eyes, his neckcloth dragged from his neck and the clothes from his body; for the London rough was then, as now, a terrible and unholy specimen of humanity.

The crowd now followed the queen to the principal entrance of the Abbey, where she presented herself for admission. The officer on guard demanded her ticket, when she replied that as Queen of England she needed none; on which he expressed his regret, but said he must obey his orders and admit none but those who held tickets. Deeply humiliated, Her Majesty turned away and, attended by her little band of friends, went to the other doors, where she repeated her demand for admission and was again repulsed; as a final insult a file of soldiers were formed across the platform to prevent her proceeding farther. With a broken heart she left the scene, and in less than a month from

that time death had ended all her troubles.

The continued excitement under which she had laboured for months, brought on a disease from which she knew there was no recovery. 'I know I shall die,' she said quietly, 'and I don't regret it.' Though she had but little to leave, she made her will, caused her diary, which had been kept for years, and which contained many strange pages, to be burned in her presence, and spoke forgivingly of her enemies. Her death took place on the 7th of August, 1821. 'I desire,' she said in her will, 'that the inscription on my coffin be, "Here lies Caroline of Brunswick, the injured Queen of England."'

Lord Sidmouth hurried to Holyhead to communicate the intelligence of her demise to the king, who had a little while before started to visit his Irish subjects. Five days after that on which she died His Majesty landed in Ireland, and the spot on which his royal foot was first set, is unto this day marked by a monument erected by his most grateful Hibernian subjects

His Majesty's passage to Dublin was, according to the Duke of Buckingham's 'Memoirs of the Court of George IV.' 'occupied in eating

goose-pie and drinking whiskey, in which His Majesty partook most abundantly, singing many joyous songs, and being in a state, on his arrival, to double in sight even the numbers of his gracious subjects assembled on the pier to receive him. The fact was that they were in the last stage of iutoxication.'

Hours before he landed a vast crowd had collected on the shore, all eager to catch a glimpse of the burly figured, mutton-chop-whiskered, rubicund-complexioned elderly gentleman, daintily attired in a blue frock-coat and pantaloons, with Hessian boots and a little foraging cap bedizened with gold lace, stuck jauntily on his head. In their excess of enthusiastic loyalty and at the rare sight of royalty, some of the people shed tears, and all of them cheered him to the echo.

The pious and portly monarch extended a hand somewhat unsteady, cased in a white silk glove, over them, and prayed, in rather husky tones, that God would bless them ; for which they filled the air with the sound of loud acclamations, and in return His Majesty removed the little foraging cap from his kingly brow again and again. He

then drove to the Viceregal Lodge, where he made the crowd which had followed him, a very remarkable speech, to which they listened with great respect and much amazement.

He was obliged (invariably pronounced obliged by the royal lips) to them for their reception, 'particular circumstances,' (he said, alluding to the queen's death), 'have occurred, known to you all, of which it is better at present,' he added in confidence, 'not to speak; upon these subjects I leave it to your delicate and generous hearts to appreciate my feelings.' In the next sentence he, with characteristic delicacy, assured them this was the happiest day of his life, and imparted to them the astonishing information that his heart had always been Irish; 'from the day it first beat,' he said, 'I have loved Ireland.'

But neither this assurance and what followed were too strong for his hearers, who loved to be flattered as well as to flatter. Rank, station, and honour His Majesty held as nothingness and vanity, but to live in the hearts of his Irish subjects was to him the most exalted happiness; he would give a proof of his affection to them that

day by drinking their health in a bumper of Irish whiskey, and he hoped they would do the same unto him. His Majesty, it may be added, forgot to give the barefooted and ragged crowd who had tramped after him nine miles to the Vice-regal Lodge, the means of following his royal advice; but waving his tinsel-adorned cap to them once more, he disappeared within the Lodge.

Meanwhile, the government, acting under special instructions from the king, made speedy preparations for the queen's funeral. She had desired to be buried in Brunswick, and August 14 was the day fixed for the cortége to start for Harwich. Lady Hood addressed a letter to the premier, asking that some delay might be made, as the ladies who were to accompany the queen's remains had not time to prepare. To which a brief answer was made, that, if the ladies were not ready, they might stay behind, and, when convenient to themselves, might join the procession on its route. Common courtesy had not been paid the queen during her life, and common respect was denied to her remains. Her Majesty's friends were refused information

as to the route by which the funeral would proceed.

The most direct way lay through the City, and the lord mayor and corporation made ready to receive the royal remains at Temple Bar, and accompany them to Whitechapel. The government, however, privately determined that the procession should not pass through the City, and that the people should not be permitted the opportunity which would be afforded them, if the body were allowed to pass through the principal streets, of paying their last tributes of sympathy and respect to one whose life had known persecution and sorrow. They kept their peace, however, until the morning of the 14th. On that day, when Sir George Naylor, who was instructed by the government to see their directions carried out, arrived at the queen's residence, and entered the apartment where the royal body lay, he was met by the few intimate friends of the queen, headed by Dr. Lushington, who censured the steps taken by those in authority.

‘I enter my solemn protest,’ said the doctor, stoutly, ‘in right of the legal power which is

vested in me by Her late Majesty, as executor. I command that the body be not removed till the arrangements suitable to the rank and dignity of the deceased are made.'

His words might as well have been addressed to empty air. The remains were at once removed, and the procession—bereft of all signs of state and dignity, save for the attendance of a squadron of cavalry, whose presence was intended to quell all popular demonstrations—set out, followed by Her late Majesty's legal advisers, physicians, and few friends, most of whom drove in their private carriages. The sky was overcast, the day gloomy, and torrents of rain fell unceasingly, yet the road was thickly lined with people, who, having heard of the intention of conveying the body through the byways and the outskirts of the City, showed by their excited and threatening manner that, in spite of all opposition, they were determined to have the queen's remains spared this last insult, and have them carried through the streets of London.

All went well until the procession reached Kensington Church, when an attempt was made by those in authority to turn the cortège up

Church Street into the Bayswater Road, in order to avoid the City, when a hoarse cry went up from the assembled thousands, mingled with groans and hisses; but this indication of the people's feelings not having the desired effect, they pressed forward, quickly dug up the road, and, in an incredibly short space, barricaded it so effectually that progress was impossible. Sir Richard Baker and a company of Life Guards were now sent for, but, their services being of no use, orders were given that the direct road to London should be taken. The people celebrated this victory with ringing cheers; and once more this strange, but far from solemn, procession wended its unseemly way.

However, the government were as determined as the crowd that their will should not be thwarted, and orders were at once sent to Sir Richard Baker and the commander of the Life Guards that the remains of this most sad and uncrowned queen should be taken through Hyde Park into the Edgware Road, and so avoid the City. When the procession, therefore, arrived at Hyde Park Corner, another

scene was enacted. The crowd, whose numbers were now much increased, seeing the intention of those in authority, firmly held the gates, crying out, in a voice of thunder, 'The City, the City!' Deaf to this appeal, an attempt was made to cross the Park, but the resistance of the populace proved too strong, and an effort was then made to proceed down Park Lane. This was likewise defeated; but, whilst the attempt was being made, and the attention of the people directed to this spot, part of the procession forced its way into the Park, and its entrance was quickly followed by the soldiery, who closed the gates on the people. The royal remains were now quickly trotted across the park, followed by the disorganised cavalry; but before they could reach Cumberland Gate, the crowd had rushed round the walls, and were ready to meet them. The people were now furious in their excitement, and resolved to have their desires carried out at any sacrifice. Packed closely together, they made all further progress impossible. A halt was therefore made, but as no signs of turning back were given, the exasperated crowd pulled down a great part of

the park wall, and commenced to fling stones at the soldiers and officers; in return a volley was fired, which had the effect of killing two men and wounding many. Frightened and subdued for the moment, the crowd gave way, and the queen's remains were galloped towards the Edgware Road. Meanwhile the people, always mighty when united, had recovered their first surprise, and now, more enraged than before, barricaded the road in such a manner that it was impossible for the procession to proceed without the aid of artillery.

Sir Richard Baker, fearing more bloodshed, and the probable destruction of many lives, yielded to the wishes of the people, and, after the royal remains had been for seven hours exposed to the uttermost humiliation, and driven, now here, now there, through a pitiless storm of wind and rain, they were at last forced down Drury Lane into the Strand. For the consideration and humanity which Sir Richard Baker showed in not following out the blindly obstinate wishes of the government, and refusing to risk the lives of soldiers and civilians, he lost his office of chief magistrate, by the king's desire.

At Temple Bar the funeral was met by the Lord Mayor, who, in virtue of his office as City king, forbade the Life Guards to cross the barrier marking the boundary of his kingdom. He and his Corporation attended the remains as far as Whitechapel, from whence they were taken to Colchester, and allowed to rest the night at St. Peter's Church. The plate bearing the inscription, 'Here lies Caroline of Brunswick, the injured Queen of England,' was at dead of night affixed to the coffin, but was ruthlessly wrenched off next morning, and replaced by another, on which her name and date of her death were merely inscribed.

Arrived at Harwich, the coffin was conveyed with little ceremony to the frigate *Glasgow*, followed still by a few faithful friends—Lord and Lady Hood, Lady Anne Hamilton, Count Vasali, and Dr. and Mrs. Lushington. On August 24 the remains reached Brunswick, where they were placed between those of the deceased's father and her brother, in the vaults beneath the church of St. Blaize; and here at last this most unhappy woman was allowed to rest in peace.

The king returned to London, on September 15, from his visit to the Emerald Isle, where he had eaten many heavy dinners, drunk more bumpers of whiskey punch than was good for him, and made many flowery and foolish speeches. On departing, he once more blessed his loyal Irish subjects, and told them, with a voice which emotion and a too liberal libation of whiskey had helped to make unsteady, that he 'felt depressed with sincere sorrow' at leaving them; he had 'never felt sensations of more delight,' strange to say, than when he arrived, and now he could not 'expect to feel any superior, nor many equal, till,' says he, 'I have the happiness of seeing you again.' Alas! Providence spared the Irish people the pleasure of seeing him once more.

When he was about to embark, Daniel O'Connell, followed by a deputation of ten gentlemen, arrived, and, going down on their loyal knees on the pier, they presented this modern Cæsar, in hessians and a little foraging-cap, with a laurel crown. The king graciously raised up Daniel, shook hands with him, and paid him a compliment. Some time after, when

the Liberator attended one of His Majesty's levées, royalty ungraciously turned its broad back on him, and took no notice of him beyond muttering to its next neighbour, 'Damn the fellow! what does he come here for?'

Shortly after his return from Ireland, His Majesty visited his faithful Hanoverian subjects, and finally permitted the light of his countenance to shine in brief splendour upon the Scotch, who had remained long the enemies of the house of Guelph. These visits seemed to have exhausted his love for display; when he returned from the land of cakes and ale, he was seen by his subjects but three times in public; once when he prorogued Parliament, and twice when he visited the theatres.

During the last six years of his life, the world saw him not. Even his beloved Brighton, the scene of his lavish expenditure and Oriental voluptuousness, was forsaken for the seclusion of Windsor. Here he indulged his taste for building by erecting the Chinese and fishing-temples; and occasionally diverting his elegant leisure by fishing in, and sailing on, the Virginia Water. This self sought retirement was, how-

ever, brightened by the presence of the Marchioness of Conyngham, a woman of great attraction and easy virtue, who exercised a sway over this ruler of three kingdoms which lasted till his death. She had indeed cheered his stay in Ireland by her presence, the royal yacht having been sent to Holyhead to convey her to Dublin.

‘I never in my life,’ writes Fremantle to the Marquis of Buckingham, ‘heard anything to equal the king’s infatuation and conduct towards Lady Conyngham. She lived exclusively with him during the whole time he was in Ireland at the Phœnix Park. When he went to Slane, she received him dressed out as for a drawing-room. He saluted her, and they then retired alone to her apartments.’

With the beauty of an angel, the marchioness possessed the wisdom of the serpent, and moulded the mighty sovereign in all things to her will. At her desire, ministers rose and fell; shepherds, with a salary of some thousands per annum, were appointed to govern their spiritual flocks; favourites were raised to high places, and enemies humbled to the dust. Nor did her

ladyship forget what was due to herself and her family. Her nominal lord, by virtue of his position as her husband, was created a marquis ; likewise a lieutenant-general in the army ; likewise a judge of the Marshalsea Court, and of the court of the king's palace ; likewise Lord Steward of the king's household and Constable and Lieutenant of Windsor Castle ; whilst her eldest son, Lord Mount-Charles, was appointed master of the robes to the king, salary £4,000, and groom of the bed-chamber, salary £500. She herself is said to have received half a million of money from her royal slave, besides jewels of exceeding great value, one of which was a large sapphire, an heirloom of the Stuarts, presented by Cardinal York to George III. When regent, the king had given this to his daughter, but at her death had asked it from Prince Leopold, making the excuse that it was one of the crown jewels. At the king's death, it was with some difficulty obtained from the marchioness, whose attractive person it had long adorned.

‘ The king,’ writes Charles Greville, Clerk of the Privy Council, ‘ continues to heap all kinds of presents upon Lady Conyngham, and she

lives at his expense; they do not possess a servant; even Lord Conyngham's *valet de chambre* is not properly their servant. They all have situations in the king's household, from which they receive their pay, while they continue in the service of the Conynghams. They dine every day while in London at St. James's, and, when they give a dinner, it is cooked at St. James's and brought up to Hamilton Place in hackney-coaches, and in machines made expressly for the purpose; there is merely a fire lit in their kitchen for such things as must be heated on the spot. A more despicable scene cannot be exhibited than that which the interior of our Court presents—every base, low, and unmanly propensity, with selfishness, avarice, and a life of petty intrigue and mystery.' The same authority tells us that, during the king's last illness, 'waggons were loaded every night and sent away from the castle, but what their contents were, was not known.'

Watchful and jealous of the position she held, avaricious and far-seeing, it became her policy to exclude the outer world as far as possible from his sybaritic Majesty, and keep him bound

in the chains of her evil fascinations, within that charmed circle over which she held absolute sway. She carried out her project with such skill that in a short time the royal voluptuary completely immured himself within the walls of Windsor Castle, and his people knew him but by name. So strict a watch did she keep over him that, according to Lord Colchester's diary, dated March, 1820, 'The Chancellor told Sir T. Tyrwhitt that, since Lady Conyngham was at Windsor, he had never been suffered to enter those gates, except once that he was sent for when Lady Conyngham was absent.'

From want of exercise and too free an indulgence in cherry-brandy, the kingly form—once padded, pinched, decked in silks, satins, tawdry tinsels, and French paste, until its beauty dazzled humanity—became unwieldy; and the royal countenance, once bewigged and bepowdered so beautifully that its mere glance was rapture, its smile intoxication, now grew terribly bloated. Therefore his vain but sacred Majesty, who feared ridicule more than aught else in life, grew sorely sensitive to the gaze of all

eyes, and shunned them as much as possible, because, as the Duke of Wellington told Charles Greville, 'he is afraid of the jokes that may be cut on his person.' When he fished in the Virginia Water, or visited the gimcrack temples he had erected, the only person allowed to accompany him was his beloved marchioness; and when he honoured the menagerie at the lodge with his presence, strict orders were given that no one was to be admitted. When he went out in his pony-chaise, if any persons were seen on the road in the park, the ponies' heads were turned sharply round, and His Majesty drove in a contrary direction, to escape even the casual glances of his subjects. The Reverend George Croly tells us, that the monarch seldom rode in the long walk from the castle, because he feared to meet the Windsor people on his way to Frogmore. 'His most private way,' he continues, 'was through a small gate in the park wall, opposite another small gate in the walls of the grounds at Frogmore, at the Datchet side. He there crossed the road in a moment, and had rides so arranged between Frogmore and Virginia Water, that he had between twenty and

thirty miles of neatly-planted avenues, from which the public were wholly excluded. At certain points of these rides which open towards the public thoroughfares of the park, there were always servants stationed on these occasions to prevent the intrusion of strangers upon the king's privacy.

The irreverent gaze of the workmen continually employed in making repairs and alterations at Windsor, soon became more than he could brook, and sent him into a towering passion. One day, when Captain Gronow called at the royal residence on Sir Benjamin Bloomfield, they were suddenly surprised by the entrance of His Majesty in a royal rage, who, without any ceremony, shouted out, 'I will not allow those maid-servants to look at me when I go in and out; and if I find they do so again I will have them discharged.' 'I could hardly believe my ears,' says the captain, 'that a man born to the highest rank could take umbrage at such pardonable curiosity. But while riding in Hyde Park the next day, I was joined by General Baylie, who told me that the king constantly complained of the servants staring at

him, and that strict orders had been given to discharge anyone caught repeating the offence.'

The older he grew, the more eccentric His Majesty became, and the more ridiculous his mode of life. The suite of rooms he inhabited he caused to be artificially heated until they were overpowering to all who entered them. About seven in the morning the window-curtains of his bed-room were opened, though he, during the last years of his life, never rose till six o'clock in the evening, being at the same time perfectly well in health. Here lying in bed he breakfasted, and during the day he drank many glasses of his favourite cherry-brandy, read such letters as were delivered to him, received such visitors as were permitted him; the marchioness and her noble family being regularly amongst the number. He delighted to keep those who came to see him on business of state, waiting for hours in an ante-chamber, whilst he 'cut his coarse jokes with all the coarse merriment which is his characteristic' with the pages and menials around him; or listened to all the gossip and scandal which his surgeon, O'Reilly, could tell him, His Majesty being 'the greatest master of

gossip in the world,' whose 'curiosity about everybody's affairs is insatiable.' When the surgeon had duly discharged his budget and turned his back, his royal master confided his opinion to the pages, that O'Reilly was 'the damndist liar in the world.'

At six o'clock this king, by the grace of God, rose, and allowed himself to be dressed; then visited his beloved marchioness in her apartments for an hour, after which he dined, principally on vegetables and pastry, of which he was excessively fond.

'His conduct,' says Captain Gronow, 'from being that of a sensual, greedy old man, became that of a spoilt child; and the way he spent his time was frivolous in the extreme. He was very fond of punch, made from a recipe by his *maitre d'hôtel*, Mr. Maddison, and which he drank after dinner; this was the only time he was agreeable, and on these occasions he would sing songs, relate anecdotes of his youth, and play on the violoncello; afterwards going to bed in "a comfortable state." But, though he retired in this condition, his sleep was short and restless; he rang the bell forty times during

the night, and tossed about wearily until morning, when the same daily programme was gone through. The Duke of Wellington told Mr. Raikes that, when the king sent for him to form a new administration, in 1828, he found His Majesty "dressed," said the duke, in a dirty silk jacket and a turban night cap, one as greasy as the other; for, notwithstanding his coquetry about dress in public, he was extremely slovenly and dirty in private. The first words he said to me were, "Arthur, the Cabinet is defunct;" and then he began to describe the manner in which the late ministers had taken leave of him in giving in their resignations. This was accompanied by the most ludicrous mimicry of the voice and manner of each individual, so strikingly like, that it was quite impossible to refrain from fits of laughter.'

Mimicry was indeed a thing in which he excelled, and which afforded him vast amusement. By the exercise of this talent he gained considerable applause when he, lying in bed, gave some capital imitations of his stud-groom, Jack Radford, for the benefit of his *valet de chambre* and his pages. His hallucinations were

also remarkable, but took a more amusing turn than those of his late father. When he had dined, and had become garrulous, he was wont to tell those around him, including the Duke of Wellington, of the Battle of Waterloo. He had so often dressed himself in the uniform of a field-marshal, that at last he came to believe himself a man of right valiant deeds, and spoke of the manner in which he had charged the French with the Household Brigade. On one occasion he told the Iron Duke that he, the king, had 'completely bowled over the French cavalry commanded by Marshal Ney.' The duke listened to him with the patience due to royalty, and, when he had finished his foolish speech, replied,

'I have heard you, sir, say so before; but I did not witness this marvellous charge. You must know that the French cavalry are the best in Europe.'

The idea of having, by his great achievements in this famous battle-field, overthrown Napoleon, and given peace to Europe, was one which had haunted him for years. Sheridan, who had once heard him make this boast, said, when

he had quitted his presence, 'That is well enough, but what he particularly piques himself upon is the last productive harvest.' On another occasion the king said he remembered old Lord Chesterfield, the polite letter writer. The famous earl, His Majesty declared, had said to him, "Sir, you are the fourth Prince of Wales I have known, and I must give Your Royal Highness one piece of advice—stick to your father; as long as you adhere to your father, you will be a great and a happy man, but, if you separate yourself from him, you will be nothing, and an unhappy one;" and, by God, added the king, I never forgot that advice, and acted upon it all my life.'

'We all,' said the Duke of Wellington, who told the story, 'looked at one another with astonishment.'

No wonder they looked at each other, remembering the shameful conduct of the king to his father, and their disgraceful quarrels. But His Majesty went still further with his delusions, and told his friends that the late king—who feared and detested his eldest born, and thanked God that of all his sons his heir

alone was a coward—said to him, ‘Of all the men I have ever known, you are the one on whom I have the greatest dependence ; and you are the most perfect gentleman.’

Towards the last years of his life, he was threatened with loss of sight.

‘He is in a great fright,’ writes Charles Greville, ‘with his father’s fate before him, that he will become blind and mad too ; he is already a little of both.’

It was also reported that he suffered from gout in the knee, but Fremantle, now made treasurer to His Majesty’s household, writes to a friend,

‘I rather suspect it is more in the mind, the disease, than in the knee.’

So his useless, burdensome life, voluptuous and petty, magnificent and mean to the last, passed on, and in May, 1830, prayers were offered to heaven in the churches all over the land that God in His wisdom and justice might spare this august monarch to his people ; it being quite well understood at the same time that his life could not possibly last many months. He suffered from gout, affection of the heart,

and dropsy, but he had no apprehensions of his own death, nor even of his immediate danger, and his physicians, being thorough courtiers, up to this time withheld from shocking his royal nerves by insinuating that anything so natural as death could approach him. In these his last days he was friendless, and would have been alone save for his paid sycophants. All his life he had posed as a fine gentleman, and had found many to believe him such ; he had dressed himself in gaudy stuffs, had worn five thousand steel beads on his hat, and had invented a new buckle for his shoes ; his bows outrivalled those of his French dancing-master, his smiles were pronounced irresistible, his deportment grace itself ; but behind this outward show all was false ; the puppet, perfect in its dress and movements, was stuffed with bran, and there was no trace of heart, honour, or manhood to be found in its composition. He lied to and deceived men ; he flattered and ruined women ; was insincere to his friends ; cajoled and cheated his creditors ; hated and imposed on his ministers ; and burdened his people in the days of commercial depression by boundless extravagance.

With prize-fighters, jockeys, tailors, and money-lenders he was familiar ; but the petty German pride he inherited never permitted him to be friendly with his aristocracy. Such he had been through life, and, now that his last days had come, none were found to regret his inevitable death.

On the night of June 25, 1830, having paid his accustomed visit to the marchioness, he retired to bed, without feeling any symptoms of illness, but at two o'clock he suddenly awoke in great agitation, and called out for assistance. Sir Wathen Waller was soon by his bedside, and raised him up.

'They have deceived me,' he whispered, fearfully, his bloated face wild from terror, his whole frame quivering ; then came the terrible cry, 'O God, I am dying!' and with one short gasp he fell back dead.

An immense and costly wardrobe, which he left behind, is said to have been sufficiently various and splendid for Drury Lane Theatre. It contained uniforms of every sort, the costumes of all the orders in Europe, magnificent furs, pelisses, hunting coats, and breeches with-

out number. 'His profusion,' says Greville, 'in these articles was unbounded, because he never paid for them, and his memory was so accurate that one of his pages told me he recollected every article of dress, no matter how old, and that they were always liable to be called on to produce some particular coat or other article of apparel of years gone by.' He had long enjoyed, and was proud of, the distinction of being the best-wigged prince in Christendom and the best-dressed man in Europe; but the attainment of such honours was costly—to the nation.

'Incredible as it may appear,' writes Mr. Raikes, 'I have been told by those about him, and by Bachelor, who entered his service as *valet-de-chambre*, that a plain coat, from its repeated alterations, would often cost £300 before it met his approbation. This, of course, included the several journeys of the master and his men backwards and forwards to Windsor, as they almost lived on the road.'

His effects included the finest collection of snuff-boxes in England; he seemed to have had a passion for them, and in the early days of the regency he had called on the government to

pay the sum of £22,500 for these articles, which he had presented to foreign ministers during the previous thirty months. His belongings also contained three hundred whips, canes of all shapes and sizes, a vast number of wigs, five hundred pocket-books of different dates, and in every one of them money; gold was also found scattered through all his boxes, the whole sum of which amounted to £10,000. There were other things, too, in the strange collection which told a sad tale of the useless, profligate, flippant life of the owner; among them a vast quantity of women's hair, of all colours and lengths, some locks having the powder and pomatum yet sticking to them; also a heap of women's gloves, *gages d'amour*, with the perspiration still marked on the fingers; a quantity of trinkets, many of which were discovered to be mere showy, useless trash, for the most valuable had been already secured by Lady Conyngham, those in her possession being estimated to be worth £80,000; and, finally, notes and letters in abundance.

The king was dead, but there was no sign of mourning in the royal household, nor did the

nation mourn. His next brother, the Duke of York, having also passed away, His Royal Highness of Clarence was proclaimed king, and the world went on its way as usual; then came the day appointed for the committal of his late Majesty into kindred dust.

‘The funeral of George IV.,’ says Huish, ‘was a positive jubilee. Crowds hastened to witness the pageantry of the spectacle; but not on a single countenance was observed an expression of grief. The park was thronged with joyous parties, and shouts of revelry and mirth were interrupted only by the firing of the minute-gun, of the rolling of the carriages conveying the *mourners* to the ceremony. Under one tree was heard the glee of “When Arthur first at Court began,” and at another, “A merry king, and a merry king, and a right merry king was he;” whilst in the streets of the town, in the immediate vicinity of the castle,—where lay, in all the magnificence of royalty, and all the littleness and insignificance of humanity, the putrifying remains of England’s sovereign defunct,—a kind of fair was held, where the life and portrait of the late king of blessed memory

were to be had for one penny; and the amours of the Marchioness of Conyngham, as a necessary appendix, for a penny also. It was intended to be a holy-day, but it was a genuine *bona-fide* holiday.'

The evidence of Charles Greville, who was also present, may be added :

'The ceremony,' he writes, 'was very well managed, and a fine sight, the military part particularly, and the Guards were magnificent. The attendance was not very numerous, and, when they had all got together in St. George's Hall, a gayer company I never beheld; they were all as merry as grigs. The king was chief mourner, and to my astonishment, as he entered the chapel directly behind the body, in a situation in which he should have been apparently, if not really, absorbed in the melancholy duty he was performing, he darted up to Strathaven, who was ranged on one side below the dean's stall, shook him heartily by the hand, and then went on nodding to the right and left.'

So passed away a king who, by the many vices of his character, earned the detestation of his people.

‘He was indeed,’ said the Duke of Wellington, ‘the most extraordinary compound of talent, wit, buffoonery, obstinacy, and good feeling that I ever saw in any character in my life;’ while Greville, who also knew him, writes, ‘The littleness of his character prevents his displaying the dangerous faults that belong to great minds, but with vices and weaknesses of the lowest and most contemptible order, it would be difficult to find a disposition more abundantly furnished . . . a more contemptible, cowardly, selfish, unfeeling dog does not exist than this king on whom such flattery is constantly lavished.’ Praed has written his epitaph in graphic lines—

‘A noble, nasty course he ran,
Superbly filthy and fastidious;
He was the world’s first gentleman,
And made the appellation hideous.’

THE END.



